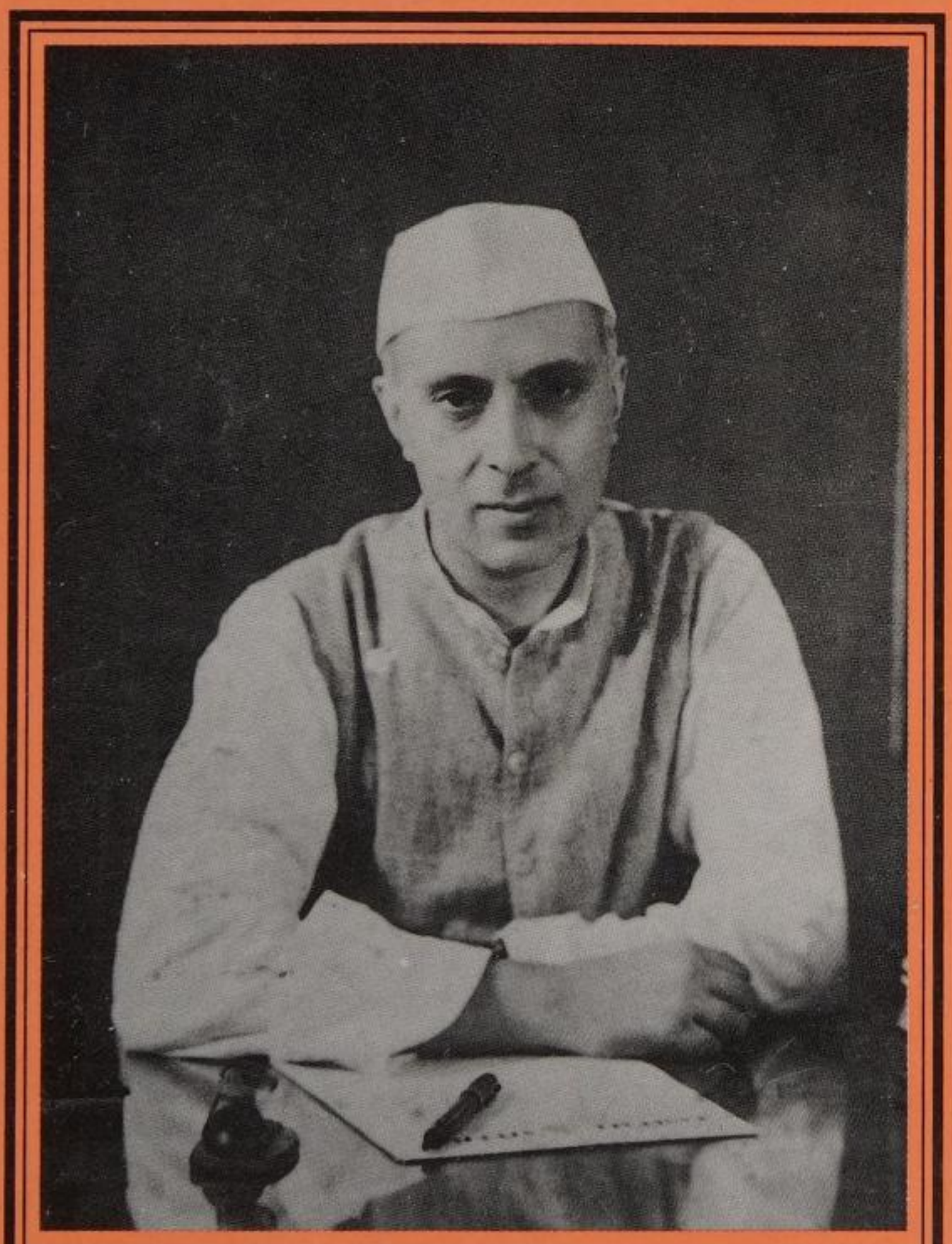
Selections from

NEHRU'S

Discovery of India



Concept and presentation

Francis Fanthome

and

D. E. W. Shaw

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Nehru's Discovery of India

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Editors' Note

How far a single individual can influence a people's thought is difficult to fathom. In the 'Discovery of India', Jawaharlal Nehru shared his perception of the strengths and problems of India as a nation. His work, as part of the national literary canon, can be used to support the educational framework with a view to foster a sense of national identity through an understanding of the glorious intellectual and spiritual tradition of the country. Jawaharlal Nehru's writings, we believe, will motivate young people to embrace and sustain the spirit of India's freedom and integrity.

F. Fanthome
D. E. W. Shaw

Publisher's Note

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote *The Discovery of India* during his imprisonment in the Ahmednagar Fort jail in 1944. He attempted to explore the evolution of a unified culture over the ages. India's cultural traditions were examined by him in an effort to identify the essence or spirit of India's diverse but united people.

However, Nehru was not aiming merely at an academic study of India's cultural history. He felt India's past was alive in its present and therefore examining it would enable the people to meet the challenges and problems they faced in modern India.

Developments in Nehru's age in India and abroad, seemed to be introducing a variety of bewildering changes. The Second World War was coming to an end and new political systems were emerging. The Indian freedom movement seemed to be floundering, unsure of its national identity and objectives. Finally, science and technology were bringing about profound changes in human life.

These were Nehru's preoccupations as he wrote this book. He felt the urgent need to understand the implications of the changes he saw all around, and the need to harmonize them with existing structure and ideas. By this process, retaining strengths and reforming weaknesses, Indians would recognize themselves as citizens of a single nation who needed to cooperate with each other and the world at large in order to be able to coexist and prosper.

The Discovery of India was Nehru's attempt to delve deep into the sources of India's national personality and to underscore the continuum of India's cultural traditions, and at the same time urging people to adapt themselves to address the social and political challenges of the day.

Life's Philosophy

Nehru felt that as he matured and experienced life, he had grown less confident of the path towards his long cherished ideals. In this later phase of his life, he was making a more realistic assessment of human weaknesses and the problems in the way of progress.

Yet he retained his faith in the force or spirit of man, that had somehow guided human beings. In a changing world, Nehru was convinced that humankind was in crucial need of an active and positive philosophy or way of thinking. Neither religious systems nor spiritualism, with their unexplained assumptions were acceptable to him. Nor were philosophical speculations with their focus on the abstract. Even Marxism and Leninism, were found to be wanting because of their doctrinal rigidity and lack of ethical means.

Nehru did not claim that there was a single philosophy or doctrine for human development. He stated that he appreciated an ethical approach to human life which was also scientific and objective so as to build a human culture that satisfied both physical and spiritual needs. In a fast changing world where there were few certainties, these were to be valuable guidelines.

Six or seven years ago an American publisher asked me to write an essay on my philosophy of life for a symposium he was preparing. I was attracted to the idea but I hesitated, and the more I thought over it, the more reluctant I grew. Ultimately, I did not write that essay.

What was my philosophy of life? I did not know. Some years earlier I would not have been so hesitant. There was a definiteness about my thinking and objectives then which has faded away since. The events of the past few years in India, China, Europe, and all over the world have been confusing, upsetting and distressing, and the future has become vague and shadowy and has

lost that clearness of outline which it once possessed in my mind.

This doubt and difficulty about fundamental matters did not come in my way in regard to immediate action, except that it blunted somewhat the sharp edge of that activity. No longer could I function, as I did in my younger days, as an arrow flying automatically to the target of my choice ignoring all else but that target. Yet I functioned, for the urge to action was there and a real or imagined co-ordination of that action with the ideals I held. But a growing distaste for politics as I saw them seized me and gradually my whole attitude to life seemed to undergo a transformation.

The ideals and objectives of yesterday were still the ideals of today, but they had lost some of their lustre and, even as one seemed to go towards them, they lost the shining beauty which had warmed the heart and vitalized the body. Evil triumphed often enough, but what was far worse was the coarsening and distortion of what had seemed so right. Was human nature so essentially bad that it would take ages of training, through suffering and misfortune, before it could behave reasonably and raise man above that creature of lust and violence and deceit that he now was? And, meanwhile, was every effort to change it radically in the present or the near future doomed to failure?

Ends and means: were they tied up inseparably, acting and reacting on each other, the wrong means distorting and sometimes even destroying the end in view? But the right means might well be beyond the capacity of infirm and selfish human nature.

What then was one to do? Not to act was a complete confession of failure and a submission to evil; to act meant often enough a compromise with some form of that evil, with all the untoward consequences that such compromises result in.

My early approach to life's problems had been more or less scientific, with something of the easy optimism of the science of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. A secure and comfortable existence and the energy and self-confidence I possessed increased that feeling of optimism. A kind of vague humanism appealed to me.

Religion, as I saw it practised, and accepted even by thinking minds, whether it was Hinduism or Islam or Buddhism or Christianity, did not attract me. It seemed to be closely associated with superstitious practices and dogmatic beliefs, and behind it lay a method of approach to life's problems which was certainly not that of science. There was an element of magic about it, an uncritical credulousness, a reliance on the supernatural.

Yet it was obvious that religion had supplied some deeply felt inner need of human nature, and that the vast majority of people all over the world could not do without some form of religious belief. It had produced many fine types of men and women, as well as bigoted, narrow-minded, cruel tyrants. It had given a set of values to human life, and though some of these values had no application today, or were even harmful, others were still the foundation of morality and ethics.

In the wider sense of the word, religion dealt with the uncharted regions of human experience, uncharted, that is, by the scientific positive knowledge of the day.

In a sense it might be considered an extension of the known and charted region, though the methods of science and religion were utterly unlike each other, and to a large extent they had to deal with different kinds of media. It was obvious that there was a vast unknown region all around us, and science, with its magnificent achievements, knew little enough about it, though it was making tentative approaches in that direction. Probably also, the normal methods of science, its dealings with the visible world and the processes of life, were not wholly adapted to the physical, the artistic, the spiritual, and other elements of the invisible world. Life does not consist entirely of what we see and hear and feel, the visible world which is undergoing change in time and space; it is continually touching an invisible world of other, and possibly more stable or equally changeable elements, and no thinking person can ignore this invisible world.

Science does not tell us much, or for the matter of that anything about the purpose of life. It is now widening boundaries and it may invade the so-called invisible world before long and help us to understand this purpose of life in its widest sense, or at least give us some glimpses which illumine the problem of human existence. The old controversy between science and religion takes a new form—the application of the scientific method to emotional and religious experiences.

Religion merges into mysticism and metaphysics and philosophy. There have been great mystics, attractive figures, who cannot easily be disposed of as self-deluded fools. Yet mysticism (in the narrow sense of the word) irritates me; it appears to be vague and soft and

flabby, not a rigorous discipline of the mind but a surrender of mental faculties and a living in a sea of emotional experience. The experience may lead occasionally to some insight into inner and less obvious processes, but it is also likely to lead to self-delusion.

Metaphysics and philosophy, or a metaphysical philosophy, have a greater appeal to the mind. They require hard thinking and the application of logic and reasoning, though all this is necessarily based on some premises, which are presumed to be self-evident, and yet which may or may not be true. All thinking persons, to a greater or lesser degree, dabble in metaphysics and philosophy, for not to do so is to ignore many of the aspects of this universe of ours. Some may feel more attracted to them than others, and the emphasis on them may vary in different ages. In the ancient world, both in Asia and Europe, all the emphasis was laid on the supremacy of the inward life over things external, and this inevitably led to metaphysics and philosophy. The modern man is wrapped up much more in those things external, and yet even he, in moments of crisis and mental trouble often turns to philosophy and metaphysical speculations.

Some vague or more precise philosophy of life we all have, though most of us accept unthinkingly the general attitude which is characteristic of our generation and environment. Most of us accept also certain metaphysical conceptions as part of the faith in which we have grown up. I have not been attracted towards metaphysics; in fact, I have had a certain distaste for vague speculation. And yet I have sometimes found a certain intellectual fascination in trying to follow the

rigid lines of metaphysical and philosophic thought of the ancients or the moderns. But I have never felt at ease there and have escaped from their spell with a feeling of relief.

Essentially, I am interested in this world, in this life, not in some other world or a future life. Whether there is such a thing as a soul, or whether there is a survival after death or not, I do not know; and, important as these questions are, they do not trouble me in the least. The environment in which I have grown up takes the soul (or rather the *ātma*) and a future life, the *Karma* theory of cause and effect, and reincarnation for granted. I have been affected by this and so, in a sense, I am favourably disposed towards these assumptions. There might be a soul which survives the physical death of the body, and a theory of cause and effect governing life's actions seems reasonable, though it leads to obvious difficulties when one thinks of the ultimate cause. Presuming a soul, there appears to be some logic also in the theory of reincarnation.

But I do not believe in any of these or other theories and assumptions as a matter of religious faith. They are just intellectual speculations in an unknown region about which we know next to nothing. They do not affect my life, and whether they were proved right or wrong subsequently, they would make little difference to me.

Spiritualism with its seances and its so-called manifestations of spirits and the like has always seemed to me a rather absurd and impertinent way of investigating psychic phenomena and the mysteries of the after-life. Usually it is something worse, and is an

exploitation of the emotions of some over-credulous people who seek relief or escape from mental trouble. I do not deny the possibility of some of these psychic phenomena having a basis of truth, but the approach appears to me to be all wrong and conclusions drawn from scraps and odd bits of evidence to be unjustified.

Often, as I look at this world, I have a sense of mysteries, of unknown depths. The urge to understand it, in so far as I can, comes to me; to be in tune with it and to experience it in its fullness. But the way to that understanding seems to me essentially the way of science, the way of objective approach, though I realize that there can be no such thing as true objectiveness. If the subjective element is unavoidable and inevitable, it should be conditioned as far as possible by the scientific method.

What the mysterious is I do not know. I do not call it God because God has come to mean much that I do not believe in. I find myself incapable of thinking of a deity or of any unknown supreme power in anthropomorphic terms, and the fact that many people think so is continually a source of surprise to me. Any idea of a personal God seems very odd to me. Intellectually, I can appreciate to some extent the conception of monism, and I have been attracted towards the *Advaita* (non-dualist) philosophy of the Vedanta, though I do not presume to understand it in all its depth and intricacy, and I realize that merely an intellectual appreciation of such matters does not carry on far. At the same time the Vedanta, as well as other similar approaches, rather frighten me with their vague, formless incursions into infinity. The diversity and fullness of

nature stir me and produce a harmony of the spirit, and I can imagine myself feeling at home in the old Indian or Greek pagan and pantheistic atmosphere, but minus the conception of God or Gods that was attached to it.

Some kind of ethical approach to life has a strong appeal for me, though it would be difficult for me to justify it logically. I have been attracted by Gandhiji's stress on right means and I think one of his greatest contributions to our public life has been this emphasis. The idea is by no means new, but this application of an ethical doctrine to large-scale public activity was certainly novel. It is full of difficulty, and perhaps ends and means are not really separable but form together one organic whole. In a world which thinks almost exclusively of ends and ignores means, this emphasis on means seems odd and remarkable. How far it has succeeded in India I cannot say. But there is no doubt that it has created a deep and abiding impression on the minds of large numbers of people.

A study of Marx and Lenin produced a powerful effect on my mind and helped me to see history and current affairs in a new light. The long chain of history and of social development appeared to have some meaning, some sequence, and the future lost some of its obscurity. The practical achievements of the Soviet Union were also tremendously impressive. Often I disliked or did not understand some development there and it seemed to me to be too closely concerned with the opportunism of the moment or the power politics of the day. But despite all these developments and possible distortions of the original passion for human betterment, I had no doubt that the Soviet Revolution had

advanced human society by a great leap and had lit a bright flame which could not be smothered, and that it had laid the foundations for that new civilization towards which the world could advance. I am too much of an individualist and believer in personal freedom to like overmuch regimentation. Yet it seemed to me obvious that in a complex social structure individual freedom had to be limited, and perhaps the only way to real personal freedom was through some such limitation in the social sphere. The lesser liberties may often need limitation in the interest of the larger freedom.

Much in the Marxist philosophical outlook I could accept without difficulty: its monism and non-duality of mind and matter, the dynamics of matter and the dialectic of continuous change by evolution as well as leap, through action and interaction, cause and effect, thesis, antithesis and synthesis. It did not satisfy me completely, nor did it answer all the questions in my mind, and, almost unawares, a vague idealist approach would creep into my mind, something rather akin to the Vedanta approach. It was not a difference between mind and matter, but rather of something that lay beyond the mind. Also there was the background of ethics. I realized that the moral approach is a changing one and depends upon the growing mind and an advancing civilization; it is conditioned by the mental climate of the age. Yét there was something more to it than that, certain basic urges which had greater permanence. I did not like the frequent divorce in Communist, as in other, practice between action and these basic urges or principles. So there was an odd mixture in my mind which I could not rationally explain or

resolve. There was a general tendency not to think too much of those fundamental questions which appear to be beyond reach, but rather to concentrate on the problems of life—to understand in the narrower and more immediate sense what should be done and how. Whatever the ultimate reality may be, and whether we can ever grasp it in whole or in part, there certainly appears to be vast possibilities of increasing human knowledge, even though this may be partly or largely subjective, and of applying this to the advancement and betterment of human living and social organization.

There has been in the past, and there is to a lesser extent even today among some people, an absorption in finding an answer to the riddle of the universe. This leads them away from the individual and social problems of the day, and when they are unable to solve that riddle they despair and turn to inaction and triviality, or find comfort in some dogmatic creed. Social evils, most of which are certainly capable of removal, are attributed to original sin, to the unalterableness of human nature, or the social structure, or (in India) to the inevitable legacy of previous births. Thus one drifts away from even the attempt to think rationally and scientifically and takes refuge in irrationalism, superstition, and unreasonable and inequitable social prejudices and practices. It is true that even rational and scientific thought does not always take us as far as we would like to go. There is an infinite number of factors and relations all of which influence and determine events in varying degrees. It is impossible to grasp all of them, but we can try to pick out the dominating forces at work and by observing external material reality, and

by experiment and practice, trial and error, grope our way to ever-widening knowledge and truth.

For this purpose, and within these limitations, the general Marxist approach, fitting in as it more or less does with the present state of scientific knowledge, seemed to me to offer considerable help. But even accepting that approach, the consequences that flow from it and the interpretation on past and present happenings were by no means always clear. Marx's general analysis of social development seems to have been remarkably correct, and yet many developments took place later which did not fit in with his outlook for the immediate future. Lenin successfully adapted the Marxian thesis to some of these subsequent developments, and again since then further remarkable changes have taken place—the rise of Fascism and Nazism and all that lay behind them. The very rapid growth of technology and the practical application of vast developments in scientific knowledge are now changing the world picture with an amazing rapidity, leading to new problems.

And so while I accepted the fundamentals of the socialist theory, I did not trouble myself about its numerous inner controversies. I had little patience with leftist groups in India, spending much of their energy in mutual conflict and recrimination over fine points of doctrine which did not interest me at all. Life is too complicated and, as far as we can understand it in our present state of knowledge, too illogical, for it to be confined within the four corners of a fixed doctrine.

The real problems for me remain problems of individual and social life, of harmonious living, of a proper balancing of an individual's inner and outer life,

of an adjustment of the relations between individuals and between groups, of a continuous becoming something better and higher of social development, of the ceaseless adventure of man. In the solution of these problems the way of observation and precise knowledge and deliberate reasoning, according to the method of science, must be followed. This method may not always be applicable in our quest of truth, for art and poetry and certain psychic experiences seem to belong to a different order of things and to elude the objective methods of science. Let us, therefore, not rule out intuition and other methods of sensing truth and reality. They are necessary even for the purposes of science. But always we must hold to our anchor of precise objective knowledge tested by reason, and even more so by experiment and practice, and always we must beware of losing ourselves in a sea of speculation unconnected with the day-to-day problems of life and the needs of men and women. A living philosophy must answer the problems of today.

It may be that we of this modern age, who so pride ourselves on the achievements of our times, are prisoners of our age, just as the ancients and the men and women of medieval times were prisoners of their respective ages. We may delude ourselves, as others have done before us, that our way of looking at things is the only right way, leading to truth. We cannot escape from that prison or get rid entirely of that illusion, if illusion it is.

Yet I am convinced that the methods and approach of science have revolutionized human life more than anything else in the long course of history, and have

opened doors and avenues of further and even more radical change, leading up to the very portals of what has long been considered the unknown. The technical achievements of science are obvious enough: its capacity to transform an economy of scarcity into one of abundance is evident, its invasion of many problems which have so far been the monopoly of philosophy is becoming more pronounced.

Space-time and the quantum theory utterly changed the picture of the physical world. More recent researches into the nature of matter, the structure of the atom, the transmutation of the elements, the transformation of electricity and light, either into the other, have carried human knowledge much further. Man no longer sees nature as something apart and distinct from himself. Human destiny appears to become a part of nature's rhythmic energy.

All this upheaval of thought, due to the advance of science, has led scientists into a new region, verging on the metaphysical. They draw different and often contradictory conclusions. Some see in it a new unity, the antithesis of chance. Others, like Bertrand Russell, say, 'Academic philosophers ever since the time of Parmenides have believed the world is unity. The most fundamental of my beliefs is that this is rubbish.' Or again, 'Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and beliefs are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms.' And yet the latest developments in physics have gone a long way to demonstrate a fundamental unity in nature. 'The belief that all things are made of a single substance is as

old as thought itself; but ours is the generation which, first of all in history, is able to receive the unity of nature, not as a baseless dogma or a hopeless aspiration, but a principle of science based on proof as sharp and clear as anything which is known.'*

Old as this belief is in Asia and Europe, it is interesting to compare some of the latest conclusions of science with the fundamental ideas underlying the Advaita Vedantic theory. These ideas were that the universe is made of one substance whose form is perpetually changing, and further that the sum total of energies remains always the same. Also that 'the explanations of things are to be found within their own nature, and that no external beings or existences are required to explain what is going on in the universe,' with its corollary of a self-evolving universe.

It does not very much matter to science what these vague speculations lead to, for meanwhile it forges ahead in a hundred directions, in its own precise experimental way of observation, widening the bounds of the charted region of knowledge, and changing human life in the process. Science may be on the verge of discovering vital mysteries, which yet may elude it. Still it will go on along its appointed path, for there is no end to its journeying. Ignoring for the moment the 'why?' of philosophy, science will go on asking 'how?', and as it finds this out it gives greater content and meaning to life, and perhaps takes us some way to answering the 'why?'.

* *Karl K. Darrow. 'The Renaissance of Physics' (New York, 1936), p. 301.*

Or, perhaps, we cannot cross that barrier, and the mysterious will continue to remain the mysterious, and life with all its changes will still remain a bundle of good and evil, a succession of conflicts, a curious combination of incompatible and mutually hostile urges.

Or again, perhaps, the very progress of science, unconnected with and isolated from moral discipline and ethical considerations, will lead to the concentration of power and the terrible instruments of destruction which it has made, in the hands of evil and selfish men, seeking the domination of others—and thus to the destruction of its own great achievements. Something of this kind we see happening now, and behind this war there lies this internal conflict of the spirit of man.

How amazing is this spirit of man! In spite of innumerable failings, man, throughout the ages, has sacrificed his life and all he held dear for an ideal, for truth, for faith, for country and honour. That ideal may change, but that capacity for self-sacrifice continues, and, because of that, much may be forgiven to man, and it is impossible to lose hope for him. In the midst of disaster, he has not lost his dignity or his faith in the values he cherished. Plaything of nature's mighty forces, less than a speck of dust in this vast universe, he has hurled defiance at the elemental powers, and with his mind, cradle of revolution, sought to master them. Whatever gods there be, there is something godlike in man, as there is also something of the devil in him.

The future is dark, uncertain. But we can see part of the way leading to it and can tread it with firm steps, remembering that nothing that can happen is likely to overcome the spirit of man which has survived so many

perils; remembering also that life, for all its ills, has joy and beauty, and that we can always wander; if we know how to, in the enchanted woods of nature.

'What else is wisdom? What of man's endeavour
Or God's high grace, so lovely and so great?
To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
To hold a hand uplifted over Hate;
*And shall not Loveliness be loved for ever?**

EXERCISES

1. Why did the author turn down a request from an American publisher to write an essay on his philosophy?
2. 'No longer could I function, as I did in my younger days, as an arrow flying automatically to the target of my choice ignoring all else but that target.'
   What does the author tell us about his present manner of functioning and his attitude to life in the context of the above passage?
3. The author tells us that the ideals and objectives of yesterday were still the ideals of today, but they had lost their lustre. What examples does he give us for this observation?
4. Give four reasons why the author was not attracted to any of the religions as he saw them practised.
5. List three contributions religion has made to humanity as given by the author.
6. What reasons does the author give to justify the statement that no thinking person can ignore the invisible world?

* *Chorus from 'The Bacchae of Euripides'. Gilbert Murray's translation.*

7. Why does mysticism, in the narrow sense of the word, irritate the author?
8. Why, according to the author, does modern man tend to turn to philosophy and metaphysical speculations in moments of crisis and mental trouble?
9. Why does the author say that he does not believe in various theories and assumptions as a matter of religious faith?
10. Give the views of the author on spiritualism.
11. The author prefers not to consider God as the 'Mysterious'. What reasons does he give for this preference?
12. Why do you think the author feels that Gandhiji's emphasis on right means has been his greatest contribution to our public life?
13. What effect did the study of Marx and Lenin have on the author's interpretation of history and current affairs?
14. What, according to the author, causes one to drift away from attempting to think rationally and scientifically and take refuge in irrationalism, superstitions and unreasonable and inequitable social prejudices and practices?
15. How does the author compare the latest conclusions of science with the fundamental ideas underlying the Advaita Vedantic theory?
16. Despite failures, disaster and other adversities man has not lost his dignity or faith and the author sees something godlike in man. Describe how he justifies this statement.

The Search for India

Nehru believed that India's ancient past had produced a vital and living cultural tradition that had persisted. Having a distinct culture had given the Indian people an overarching unity of spirit and strength. This oneness of spirit—that bridged all manner of geographical and ethnic differences—had particularly struck Nehru on his campaigns across India's countryside. To find and study what this culture or spirit consisted of, was, in Nehru's eyes, a difficult but crucial task. It would not only reveal India's past experiences and strengths but also serve as an aid both to understanding India's present situation and suggesting a way ahead to meet future challenges.

Though books and old monuments and past cultural achievements helped to produce some understanding of India, they did not satisfy me or give me the answer I was looking for. Nor could they, for they dealt with a past age, and I wanted to know if there was any real connection between that past and the present. The present for me, and for many others like me, was an odd mixture of mediavalism, appalling poverty and misery and a somewhat superficial modernism of the middle classes. I was not an admirer of my own class or kind, and yet inevitably I looked to it for leadership in the struggle for India's salvation; that middle class felt caged and circumscribed and wanted to grow and develop itself. Unable to do so within the framework of British rule, a spirit of revolt grew against this rule, and yet this spirit was not directed against the structure that crushed us. It sought to retain it and control it by displacing the British. These middle classes were too much the product of that structure to challenge it and seek to uproot it.

New forces arose that drove us to the masses in the villages, and for the first time, a new and different India rose up before the young intellectuals who had almost forgotten its existence or attached little importance to it. It was a disturbing sight, not only because of its stark misery and the magnitude of its problems, but because it began to upset some of our values and conclusions. So began for us the discovery of India as it was, and it produced both understanding and conflict within us. Our reactions varied and depended on our previous environment and experience. Some were already sufficiently acquainted with these village masses not to experience any new sensation; they took them for granted. But for me it was a real voyage of discovery, and, while I was always painfully conscious of the failings and weaknesses of my people, I found in India's countryfolk something, difficult to define, which attracted me. That something I had missed in our middle classes.

I do not idealize the conception of the masses and, as far as possible, I try to avoid thinking of them as a theoretical abstraction. The people of India are very real to me in their great variety and, in spite of their vast numbers, I try to think of them as individuals rather than as vague groups. Perhaps it was because I did not expect much from them that I was not disappointed; I found more than I had expected. It struck me that perhaps the reason for this, and for a certain stability and potential strength that they possessed, was the old Indian cultural tradition which was still retained by them in a small measure. Much had gone in the battering they had received during the past 200 years. Yet something remained that was worth while, and with it so much that was worthless and evil.

During the 'twenties my work was largely confined to my own province and I travelled extensively and intensively through the towns and villages of the forty-eight districts of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, that heart of Hindustan as it has so long been considered, the seat and centre of both ancient and medieval civilization, the melting pot of so many races and cultures, the area where the great revolt of 1857 blazed up and was later ruthlessly crushed. I grew to know the sturdy Jat of the northern and western districts, that typical son of the soil, brave and independent looking, relatively more prosperous; the Rajput peasant and petty landholder, still proud of his race and ancestry, even though he might have changed his faith and adopted Islam; the deft and skilful artisans and cottage workers, both Hindu and Moslem; the poorer peasantry and tenants in their vast numbers, especially in Oudh and the eastern districts, crushed and ground down by generations of oppression and poverty, hardly daring to hope that a change would come to better their lot, and yet hoping and full of faith.

During the 'thirties, in the intervals of my life out of prison, and especially during the election campaign of 1936-7, I travelled more extensively throughout India, in towns and cities and villages alike. Except for rural Bengal, which unhappily I have only rarely visited, I toured in every province and went deep into villages. I spoke of political and economic issues and judging from my speech I was full of politics and elections. But all this while, in a corner of my mind, lay something deeper and more vivid, and elections or the other excitements of the passing day meant little to it. Another and a major

excitement had seized me, and I was again on a great voyage of discovery and the land of India and the people of India lay spread out before me. India with all her infinite charm and variety began to grow upon me more and more, and yet the more I saw of her, the more I realized how very difficult it was for me or for anyone else to grasp the ideas she had embodied. It was not her wide spaces that eluded me, or even her diversity, but some depth of soul which I could not fathom, though I had occasional and tantalizing glimpses of it. She was like some ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously. All of these existed in our conscious or subconscious selves, though we may not have been aware of them and they had gone to build up the complex and mysterious personality of India. That sphinx-like face with its elusive and sometimes mocking smile was to be seen throughout the length and breadth of the land. Though outwardly there was diversity and infinite variety among our people, everywhere there was that tremendous impress of oneness, which had held all of us together for ages past, whatever political fate or misfortune had befallen us. The unity of India was no longer merely an intellectual conception for me: it was an emotional experience which overpowered me. That essential unity had been so powerful that no political division, no disaster or catastrophe, had been able to overcome it.

It was absurd, of course, to think of India or any country as a kind of anthropomorphic entity. I did not do so. I was also fully aware of the diversities and

divisions of Indian life, of classes, castes, religions, races, different degrees of cultural development. Yet I think that a country with a long cultural background and a common outlook on life develops a spirit that is peculiar to it and that is impressed on all its children, however much they may differ among themselves. Can anyone fail to see this in China, whether he meets an old-fashioned mandarin or a Communist who has apparently broken with the past? It was this spirit of India that I was after, not through idle curiosity, though I was curious enough, but because I felt that it might give me some key to the understanding of my country and people, some guidance to thought and action. Politics and elections were day to day affairs when we grew excited over trumpery matters. But if we were going to build the house of India's future, strong and secure and beautiful, we would have to dig deep for the foundations.

EXERCISES

1. Why was it not possible for old books and past cultural achievements to produce some understanding of India for the author?
2. The author gives us an insight into what he feels were the main reasons that nurtured the spirit of revolt against British rule which ultimately led to India's salvation.
   Give three of the main reasons for this, as cited by the author.
3. What were the new forces which prompted and led young intellectuals to a discovery of India.

4. The author tells us he found more than he had expected in the people of India.
   What reasons does he give for this?
5. How does the author describe the following when he tells us of his extensive travels in the 'twenties?
   a) The sturdy Jat of the northern and western districts.
   b) The Rajput peasant and petty landholder.
   c) The poorer peasantry and tenants, especially in Oudh and the eastern districts.
6. How does the author justify that differences in class, caste, religion, race degree of cultural development, did not affect the essential unity of India?
7. What, in your opinion, affected the author most during the election campaign of 1936-7, when he travelled extensively through India?

Life and Work in Ancient India

Here Nehru has drawn a sketch of the condition of society and the economy in the Ancient Indian period. The picture that emerges is that of a highly developed culture that had evolved complex sets of relations and practices. As reconstructed from contemporary sources like the *Arthashastra* and the *Jatakas*, Ancient Indian society does not seem to have been bound either by rigid social forms or deep-seated social divisions. An advanced economy existed, based on a wide range of manufacturing and craft-related activities. There was a network of widespread and active trade relations all through India as well as abroad. All these achievements, including the advances made in the field of science and education, together formed an energetic and vital culture.

A great deal has been done by scholars and philosophers to trace the development of philosophic and metaphysical thought in the India of the past; much has also been done to fix the chronology of historic events and draw in broad outline political maps of those periods. But not much has so far been done to investigate the social and economic conditions of those days, how people lived, carried on their work, what they produced and how, and the way trade functioned. Greater attention is being paid to these vital questions now and some works by Indian scholars, and one by an American, have appeared. But a great deal remains to be done. The *Mahabharata* itself is a storehouse of sociological and other data and many more books will no doubt yield useful information. But they have to be critically examined from this particular point of view. One book of inestimable value is Kautilya's *Arthashastra*

of the fourth century BC, which gives details of the political, social, economic, and military organization of the Maurya Empire.

An earlier account, which definitely takes us back to the pre-Buddhist period in India, is contained in the collection of the Jātaka tales. These Jātakas were given their present shape sometime after the Buddha. They are supposed to deal with the previous incarnations of the Buddha and have become an important part of Buddhist literature. But the stories are evidently much older and they deal with the pre-Buddhistic period and give us much valuable information about life in India in those days. Professor Rhys Davids has described them as the oldest, most complete and most important collection of folklore extant. Many of the subsequent collection of animal and other stories which were written in India and found their way to western Asia and Europe can be traced to the Jātakas.

The Jātakas deal with the period when the final amalgamation of the two principal races of India, the Dravidians and the Aryans, was taking place. They reveal 'a multiform and chaotic society which resists more or less every attempt at classification and about which there can be no talk of an organization according to caste in that age.'* The Jātakas may be said to represent the popular tradition as contrasted with the priestly or Brahminic tradition and the Kshatriya or ruling class tradition.

* *Richard Fick. 'The Social Organisation in North-East India in Buddha's Time' (Calcutta, 1920), p. 286. A more recent book, chiefly based on the Jataka stories, is Ratilal Mehta's 'Pre-Buddhist India' (Bombay, 1939). I am indebted to this latter book for most of my facts.*

There are chronologies and genealogies of various kingdoms and their rulers. Kingship, originally, elective, becomes hereditary according to the rule of primogeniture. Women are excluded from this succession, but there are exceptions. As in China, the ruler is held responsible for all misfortunes; if anything goes wrong the fault must lie with the king. There was a council of ministers and there are also references to some kind of State assembly. Nevertheless the king was an autocratic monarch though he had to function within established convention. The high priest had an important position in court as an adviser and person in charge of religious ceremonies. There are references to popular revolts against unjust and tyrannical kings, who are sometimes put to death for their crimes.

Village assemblies enjoyed a measure of autonomy. The chief source of revenue was the land. The land-tax was supposed to represent the king's share of the produce, and it was usually, but not always, paid in kind. Probably this tax was about one-sixth of the produce. It was predominantly an agricultural civilization and the basic unit was the self-governing village. The political and economic structure was built up from these village communities which were grouped in tens and hundreds. Horticulture, rearing of livestock, and dairy farming were practised on an extensive scale. Gardens and parks were common, and fruits and flowers were valued. The list of flowers mentioned is a long one; among the favourite fruits were the mango, fig, grape, plantain and the date. There were evidently many shops of vegetable and fruit sellers in the cities, as well as of florists. The flower-garland was then, as now, a favourite of the Indian people.

Hunting was a regular occupation chiefly for the food it provided. Flesh-eating was common and included poultry and fish; venison was highly esteemed. There were fisheries and slaughter-houses. The principal articles of diet were, however, rice, wheat, millet and corn. Sugar was extracted from sugar-cane. Milk and its various products were then, as they are now, highly prized. There were liquor shops, and liquor was apparently made from rice, fruits and sugar-cane.

There was mining of metals and precious stones. Among the metals mentioned are gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, tin, and brass. Among the precious stones were diamonds, rubies, corals, also pearls. Gold, silver and copper coins are referred to. There were partnerships for trade, and loans were advanced on interest.

Among the manufactured goods are silks, woollens and cotton textiles, rugs, blankets and carpets. Spinning, weaving and dyeing are flourishing and widespread industries. The metallurgical industry produces weapons of war. The building industry uses stone, wood, and bricks. Carpenters make a variety of furniture, etc., including carts, chariots, ships, bedsteads, chairs, benches, chests, toys, etc. Cane-workers make mattresses, baskets, fans, and sunshades. Potters function in every village. From flowers and sandalwood a number of perfumes, oils and 'beauty' products are made, including sandalwood powder. Various medicines and drugs are manufactured and dead bodies are sometimes embalmed.

Apart from the many kinds of artisans and craftsmen who are mentioned, various other professions are referred to: teachers, physicians and surgeons,

merchants and traders, musicians, astrologers, greengrocers, actors, dancers, itinerant jugglers, acrobats, puppet-players, pedlars.

Domestic slavery appears to have been fairly common, but agricultural and other work was done with the help of hired labour. There were even then some untouchables—the *chandalas* as they were called, whose chief business was the disposal of dead bodies.

Trade associations and craft-guilds had already assumed importance. 'The existence of trade associations,' says Fick, 'which grew partly for economical reasons, better employment of capital, facilities of intercourse, partly for protecting the legal interest of their class, is surely to be traced to an early period of Indian culture.' The Jātakas say that there were eighteen craft unions but they actually mention only four: the woodworkers and the masons, the smiths, the leather workers, and the painters.

Even in the Epics there are references to trade and craft organizations. The *Mahabharata* says: 'the safeguard of corporations (guilds) is union.' It is said that 'the merchant-guilds were of such authority that the king was not allowed to establish any laws repugnant to these trade unions. The heads of guilds are mentioned next after priests as objects of a king's anxious concern.'* The chief of the merchants, the *shreshthi* (modern seth), was a man of very considerable importance.

* *Prof. E. Washburn Hopkins in 'Cambridge History of India', Vol. 1, p. 269.*

One rather extraordinary development emerges from the Jātaka accounts. This is the establishment of special settlements or villages of people belonging to particular crafts. Thus there was a carpenters' village, consisting, it is said, of 1,000 families; a smiths' village, and so on. These specialized villages were usually situated near a city, which absorbed their special products and which provided them with the other necessaries of life. The whole village apparently worked on co-operative lines and undertook large orders. Probably out of this separate living and organization the caste system developed and spread out. The example set by the Brahmins and the nobility was gradually followed by the manufacturers' corporations and trade guilds.

Great roads, with travellers' rest houses and occasional hospitals, covered North India and connected distant parts of the country. Trade flourished not only in the country itself but between India and foreign countries. There was a colony of Indian merchants living at Memphis in Egypt about the fifth century BC as the discovery of modelled heads of Indians there has shown. Probably there was trade also between India and the islands of South-East Asia.

Overseas trade involved shipping and it is clear that ships were built in India both for the inland waterways and for ocean traffic. There are references in the Epics to shipping duties being paid by 'merchants coming from afar.'

The Jātakas are full of references to merchants' voyages. There were overland caravans across deserts going westward to the seaport of Broach and north

towards Gandhara and Central Asia. From Broach ships went to the Persian Gulf for Babylon (Baveru). There was a great deal of river traffic and, according to the Jātakas, ships travelled from Benares, Patna, Champa (Bhagalpur) and other places to the sea and thence to southern ports and Ceylon and Malaya. Old Tamil poems tell us of the flourishing port of Kaveripattinam on the Kaveri river in the South, which was a centre of international trade. These ships must have been fairly large as it is said in the Jātakas that 'hundreds' of merchants and emigrants embarked on a ship.

In the 'Milinda' (this is of the first century AC Milinda is the Greek Bactrian king of North India who became an ardent Buddhist) it is said: 'As a shipowner who has become wealthy by constantly levying freight in some seaport town will be able to traverse the high seas, and go to Vanga (Bengal) or Takkola, or China or Sovira, or Surat or Alexandria, or the Koromandel coast, or Further India, or any other place where ships do congregate.'*

Among the exports from India were: 'Silks, muslins, the finer sorts of cloth, cutlery and armour, brocades, embroideries and rugs, perfumes and drugs, ivory and ivory work, jewellery and gold (seldom silver); these were the main articles in which the merchant dealt.'†

India, or rather North India, was famous for her weapons of war, especially for the quality of her steel, her swords and daggers. In the fifth century BC a large

* *Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids in 'Cambridge History of India', Vol. 1, p. 212.*

† *Rhys Davids. 'Buddhist India', p. 98.*

body of Indian troops, cavalry and infantry, accompanied the Persian army to Greece. When Alexander invaded Persia, it is stated in the famous Persian epic poem, Firdusi's 'Shahnamah', that swords and other weapons were hurriedly sent for by the Persians from India. The old (pre-Islamic) Arabic word for sword is 'muhannad,' which means 'from Hind' or Indian. This word is in common use still.

Ancient India appears to have made considerable progress in the treatment of iron. There is an enormous iron pillar near Delhi which had baffled modern scientists who have been unable to discover by what process it was made, which has enabled it to withstand oxidation and other atmospheric changes. The inscription on it is in the Gupta script which was in use from the fourth to the seventh century AC. Some scholars are, however, of the opinion that the pillar itself is much older than this inscription, which was added later.

Alexander's invasion of India in the fourth century BC was, from a military point of view, a minor affair. It was more of a raid across the border, and not a very successful raid for him. He met with such stout resistance from a border chieftain that the contemplated advance into the heart of India had to be reconsidered. If a small ruler on the frontier could fight thus, what of the larger and more powerful kingdoms further south? Probably this was the main reason why his army refused to march further and insisted on returning.

The quality of India's military strength was seen very soon after Alexander's return and death, when Seleucus attempted another invasion. He was defeated by Chandragupta and driven back. Indian armies then

had an advantage which others lacked; this was the possession of trained war-elephants, which might be compared to the tanks today. Seleucus Nikator obtained 500 of these war-elephants from India for his campaign against Antigonus in Asia Minor in 302 BC, and military historians say that these elephants were the decisive factor in the battle which ended in the death of Antigonus and the flight of his son Demetrius.

There are books on the training of elephants, the breeding of horses, etc; each one of these is called a *shāstra*. This word has come to mean scripture or holy writ, but it was applied indiscriminately to every kind of knowledge and science, varying from mathematics to dancing. In fact the line between religious and secular knowledge was not strictly drawn. They overlapped and everything that seemed useful to life was the object of inquiry.

Writing in India goes back to the most ancient times. Old pottery belonging to the Neolithic period is inscribed with writing in the Brahmi characters. Mohenjo-daro has inscriptions which have not so far been wholly deciphered. The Brahmi inscriptions found all over India are undoubtedly the basic script from which *Devanagri* and others have arisen in India. Some of Ashoka's inscriptions are in the Brahmi script; others, in the north-west, are in the Kharoshti script.

As early as the sixth or seventh century BC, Panini wrote his great grammar of the Sanskrit language.* He

* *Keith and some others place Panini at c. 300* BC, *but the balance of authority seems to be clear that Panini lived and wrote before the commencement of the Buddhist period.*

mentions previous grammars and already in his time Sanskrit had crystallized and become the language of an ever-growing literature. Panini's book is something more than a mere grammar. It has been described by the Soviet professor Th. Stcherbatsky, of Leningrad, as 'one of the greatest productions of the human mind.' Panini is still the standard authority on Sanskrit grammar, though subsequent grammarians have added to it and interpreted it. It is interesting to note that Panini mentions the Greek script. This indicates that there were some kind of contacts between India and the Greeks long before Alexander came to the East.

The study of astronomy was especially pursued and it often merged into astrology. Medicine had its textbooks and there were hospitals. Dhanwantari is the legendary founder of the Indian science of medicine. The best known old textbooks, however, date from the early centuries of the Christian era. These are by Charak on medicine and Sushruta on surgery. Charak is supposed to have been the royal court physician of Kanishka who had his capital in the north-west. These textbooks enumerate a large number of diseases and give methods of diagnosis and treatment. They deal with surgery, obstetrics, baths, diet, hygiene, infant-feeding, and medical education. The approach was experimental, and dissection of dead bodies was being practised in the course of surgical training. Various surgical instruments are mentioned by Sushruta, as well as operations, including amputation of limbs, abdominal, caesarean section, cataract, etc. Wounds were sterilized by fumigation. In the third or fourth century BC there were also hospitals for animals. This was

probably due to the influence of Jainism and Buddhism with their emphasis on non-violence.

In mathematics the ancient Indians made some epoch-making discoveries, notably that of the zero sign, of the decimal place-value system, of the use of the minus sign, and the use in algebra of letters of the alphabet to denote unknown quantities. It is difficult to date these, as there was always a big time-lag between the discovery and its practical application. But it is clear that the beginnings of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry were laid in the earliest period. Ten formed the basis of enumeration in India even at the time of the Rig Veda. The time and number sense of the ancient Indians was extraordinary. They had a long series of number names for very high numerals. The Greeks, Romans, Persians and Arabs had apparently no terminology for denominations above the thousand or at most the myriad (10^4 = 10,000). In India there were eighteen specific denominations (10^{18}), and there are even longer lists. In the story of Buddha's early education he is reported to have named denominations up to 10^{50}.

At the other end of the scale there was a minute division of time of which the smallest unit was approximately one-seventeenth of a second, and the smallest lineal measure is given as something which approximates to 1.37×7^{-10} inches. All these big and small figures were no doubt entirely theoretical and used for philosophical purposes. Nevertheless, the old Indians, unlike other ancient nations, had vast conceptions of time and space. They thought in a big way. Even their mythology deals with ages of hundreds of millions of years. To them the vast periods of modern geology or the astronomical distances of the stars would not

have come as a surprise. Because of this background, Darwin's and other similar theories could not create in India the turmoil and inner conflict which they produced in Europe in the middle of the nineteenth century. The popular mind in Europe was used to a time scale which did not go beyond a few thousand years.

In the *Arthashāstra* we are given the weights and measures which were in use in North India in the fourth century BC. There used to be careful supervision of the weights in the market places.

In the Epic period we have frequent mention of some kind of forest universities, situated not far from a town or city, where students gathered round well-known scholars for training and education, which comprised a variety of subjects, including military training. These forest abodes were preferred so as to avoid the distractions of city life and enable the students to lead a disciplined and continent life. After some years of this training they were supposed to go back and live as householders and citizens. Probably these forest schools consisted of small groups, though there are indications that a popular teacher would attract large numbers.

Benares has always been a centre of learning, and even in Buddha's day it was old and known as such. It was in the Deer Park near Benares that Buddha preached his first sermon; but Benares does not appear to have been at any time anything like a university, such as existed then and later in other parts of India. There were numerous groups there, consisting of a teacher and his disciples, and often between rival groups there was fierce debate and argument.

But in the north-west, near modern peshawar, there was an ancient and famous university at Takshashila or Taxila. This was particularly noted for science, especially medicine, and the arts, and people went to it from distant parts of India. The Jātaka stories are full of instances of sons of nobles and Brahmins travelling, unattended and unarmed, to Taxila to be educated. Probably students came also from Central Asia and Afghanistan, as it was conveniently situated.

It was considered an honour and a distinction to be a graduate of Taxila. Physicians who had studied in the school of medicine there were highly thought of, and it is related that whenever Buddha felt unwell his admirers brought to him a famous physician who had graduated from Taxila. Panini, the great grammarian of the sixth-seventh century BC, is said to have studied there.

Taxila was thus a pre-Buddhist university and a seat of Brahminical learning. During the Buddhist period it became also a centre of Buddhist scholarship and attracted Buddhist students from all over India and across the border. It was the headquarters of the north-western province of the Maurya Empire.

The legal position of women, according to Manu, the earliest exponent of the law, was definitely bad. They were always dependent on somebody—on the father, the husband, or the son. Almost they were treated, in law, as chattels. And yet from the numerous stories in the Epics this law was not applied very rigidly and they held an honoured placed in the home and in society. The old law-giver, Manu, himself says: 'Where women are honoured the gods dwell.' There is no mention of

women students at Taxila or any of the old universities; but some of them did function as students somewhere, for there is repeated mention of learned and scholarly women. In later ages also there were a number of eminent women scholars. Bad as the legal position of women was in ancient India, judged by modern standards, it was far better than in ancient Greece and Rome, in early Christianity, in the Canon Law of medieval Europe, and indeed right up to comparatively modern times at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The exponents of the law from Manu onwards refer to forms of partnership in business. Manu refers chiefly to priests; Yagnavalkya includes trade and agriculture. A later writer, Narada, says: 'Loss, expense, profit of each partner are equal to, more than, or less than those of other partners according to his share (invested) is equal, greater, or less. Storage, food, charges (tolls), loss, freightage, expense of keeping, must be paid by each partner in accordance with the terms of agreement.'

Manu's conception of a state was evidently that of a small kingdom. This conception was, however, growing and changing, leading to the vast Maurya Empire of the fourth century BC and to international contacts with the Greek world.

Megasthenes, the Greek Ambassador in India in the fourth century BC, totally denies the existence of slavery in India. But in this he was wrong as there were certainly domestic slaves, and there are references in Indian books of the period to improving the lot of the slaves. It is clear, however, that there was no large-scale slavery and no slave gangs for labour purposes, as were common in many countries then, and this may have led

Megasthenes to believe that slavery was completely absent. It was laid down that that 'Never shall an Arya be subjected to slavery.' Who exactly was an Arya, and who was not, it is difficult to say, but the Aryan fold at that time had come to mean rather vaguely all the four basic castes, including the shudras, but not the untouchables.

In China also, in the days of the early Han Dynasty, slaves were used primarily in domestic service. They were unimportant in agriculture or in large-scale labour works. Both in India and China these domestic slaves formed a very small proportion of the population, and in this important respect there was thus a vast difference between Indian and Chinese society and contemporary Greek and Roman society.

What were the Indians like in those distant days? It is difficult for us to conceive of a period so far and so different from ours, and yet some vague picture emerges from the miscellaneous data that we have. They were a light-hearted race, confident and proud of their traditions, dabbling in the search for the mysterious, full of questions addressed to nature and human life, attaching importance to the standards and values they had created, but taking life easily and joyously, and facing death without much concern.

Arrian, the Greek historian of Alexander's campaign in North India, was struck by this light-heartedness of the race. 'No nation,' he writes, 'is fonder of singing and dancing than the Indian.'

EXERCISES

1. List six sources the author gives for the information we now have on the social and economic conditions of India of the past.
2. Which period of the history of India do the Jātaka tales tell us about?
3. What information does the author give us about the Jātakas and their value as far as the history of India is concerned?
4. Write short notes on any three of the undermentioned as described in this chapter.
   a) Kingship
   b) Women
   c) Rulers in China
   d) The functions of the king
   e) The high priest
5. What information do we get from this chapter about
   a) village assemblies?
   b) land tax and the amount of land tax to be paid?
   c) In what form was the land tax paid?
   d) How did the political and economic structures evolve or come about?
   e) What were the main occupations of the village people of those days?
6. What does the author tell us about the various kinds of food eaten by the people of India during that age?
7. Write a short note on mining and the various metals and precious stones, which are mentioned by the author, as having been known and used by the people of that age.
8. What information about that period does the author give us on
   a) manufactured goods?
   b) the metallurgical industry?
   c) the building industry?
   d) carpenters and cane-workers?
   e) products from flowers and wood?
9. List seven professions, other than that of artisans and craftsmen, that were practised by the people of that age.

10. We understand that trade associations and craft guilds assumed importance even in that period. What were the reasons for the development of such organizations?
11. What information do we get about the establishment of special settlements or villages of people belonging to particular crafts and the evolution of the co-operative concept?
12. What does the author ascribe as the possible cause for the development of the caste system?
13. What do we learn from this chapter about the shipping industry in India and overseas trade at that time?
14. List ten items exported from India in those days.
15. The author gives us information about India having been famous for the manufacture of weapons of war and the excellent quality of steel produced by it. What incident does the author use to illustrate this?
16. Why has the iron pillar near Delhi baffled modern scientists?
17. Why was it generally believed that the iron pillar near Delhi was cast between the fourth and seventh centuries AC?
18. What is the main reason the author gives for Alexander's army refusing to march further than across the border of India?
19. After Alexander's death, Seleucus attempted another invasion of India and was defeated by Chandragupta and driven back.
    a) What was the advantage that Indian armies of those days had which others lacked?
    b) How is this advantage compared to modern-day warfare?
20. Give four ways which provide proof that writing in India goes back to the most ancient times.
21. What information does the author give us about Panini's grammar of the Sanskrit language?
22. What information does the author give about books in India on medicine, diseases, diagnosis and treatment from the early centuries of the Christian era?
23. a) List some of the important contributions ancient Indians have made in the field of mathematics.
    b) What do you feel was the greatest contribution of ancient India to mathematics?

24. Write short notes on any three of the following:-
    a) Weights and measures
    b) Forest universities
    c) Benares as a centre of learning
    d) The University of Takshashila or Taxila
    e) The legal position of women
25. What do you feel led Megasthenes to believe that there was no slavery in India?
26. How does the author answer the question—Who exactly was an Arya?
27. What picture emerges of Indians of those days from a study of this chapter?

The Indian Philosophical Approach

In India of the past, Nehru observed, the old philosophic traditions, often expressed through religion had provided a unity of outlook to Indian society and stable values to the individual. With time however, much of what had been progressive and vital in such thinking had been lost, leaving behind only dogma. But today more than ever before, wrote Nehru, there is the need for both society and the individual to be supported by certain values. Scientific advances had widened frontiers resulting in expanded and more complex social organizations but had provided no substitutes for the old social systems. Indians therefore needed to both draw from and review their philosophical heritage and develop values that were in harmony with changed social circumstances.

Though one thought leads to another, each usually related to life's changing texture, and a logical movement of the human mind is sometimes discernible, yet thoughts overlap and the new and the old run side by side, irreconcilable and often contradicting each other. Even an individual's mind is a bundle of contradictions and it is difficult to reconcile his action one with another. A people, comprising all stages of cultural development, represent in themselves and in their thoughts, beliefs, and activities, different ages of the past leading up to the present. Probably their activities may conform more to the social and cultural pattern of the present day, or else they would be stranded and isolated from life's moving stream, but behind these activities lie primitive beliefs and unreasoned convictions. It is astonishing to find in countries industrially advanced, where every person automatically uses or

takes advantage of the latest modern discovery or device, beliefs and set ideas which reason denies and intelligence cannot accept. A politician may of course succeed in his business without being a shining example of reason or intelligence. A lawyer may be a brilliant advocate and jurist and yet be singularly ignorant of other matters. Even a scientist, that typical representative of the modern age, often forgets the method and outlook of science when he goes out of his study or laboratory.

This is so even in regard to the problems that affect our daily lives in their material aspects. In philosophy and metaphysics the problems are more remote, less transient and less connected with our day's routine. For most of us they are entirely beyond our grasp unless we undergo a rigid discipline and training of the mind. And yet all of us have some kind of philosophy of life, conscious or unconscious, if not thought out then inherited or accepted from others and considered as self-evident. Or we may seek refuge from the perils of thought in faith in some religious creed or dogma, or in national destiny, or in a vague and comforting humanitarianism. Often all these and others are present together, though with little to connect them, and we develop split personalities, each functioning in its separate compartment.

Probably there was more unity and harmony in the human personality in the old days, though this was at a lower level than today except for certain individuals who were obviously of a very high type. During this long age of transition, through which humanity has been passing, we have managed to break up that unity,

but have not so far succeeded in finding another. We cling still to the ways of dogmatic religion, adhere to outworn practices and beliefs, and yet talk and presume to live in terms of the scientific method. Perhaps science has been too narrow in its approach to life and has ignored many vital aspects of it, and hence it could not provide a suitable basis for a new unity and harmony. Perhaps it is gradually broadening this basis now, and we shall achieve a new harmony for the human personality on a much higher level than the previous one. But the problem is a more difficult and complex one now, for it has grown beyond the limits of the human personality. It was perhaps easier to develop some kind of a harmonious personality in the restricted spheres of ancient and medieval times. In that little world of town and village, with fixed concepts of social organization and behaviour, the individual and the group lived their self-contained lives, protected, as a rule, from outer storms. Today the sphere of even the individual has grown world-wide, and different concepts of social organization conflict with each other and behind them are different philosophies of life. A strong wind arising somewhere creates a cyclone in one place and an anti-cyclone in another. So if harmony is to be achieved by the individual, it has to be supported by some kind of social harmony throughout the world.

In India, far more so than elsewhere, the old concept of social organization and the philosophy of life underlying it, have persisted, to some extent, to the present day. They could not have done so unless they had some virtue which stabilized society and made it conform to life's conditions. And they would not have failed

ultimately and become a drag and a hindrance, divorced from life, if the evil in them had not overcome that virtue. But, in any event, they cannot be considered today as isolated phenomena; they must be viewed in that world context and made to harmonize with it.

'In India,' says Havell, 'religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life.' A dogma might continue to be believed in, isolated from life, but a working hypothesis of human conduct must work and conform to life, or it obstructs life.' The very *raison d'être* of such a hypothesis is its workableness, its conformity to life, and its capacity to adapt itself to changing conditions. So long as it can do so it serves its purpose and performs its allotted function. When it goes off at a tangent from the curve of life, loses contact with social needs, and the distance between it and life grows, it loses all its vitality and significance.

Metaphysical theories and speculations deal not with the ever-changing stuff of life but with the permanent reality behind it, if such exists. Hence they have a certain permanence which is not affected by external changes. But, inevitably, they are the products of the environment in which they grow and of the state of development of the human minds that conceived them. If their influence spreads they affect the general philosophy of life of a people. In India, philosophy, though in its higher reaches confined to the elect, has been more pervasive than elsewhere and has had a strong influence in moulding the national outlook and in developing a certain distinctive attitude of mind.

Buddhist philosophy played an important part in this process and, during the medieval period, Islam left its impress upon the national outlook, directly as well as indirectly, through the evolution of new sects which sought to bridge the gap between Hinduism and the Islamic social and religious structure. But, in the main, the dominating influence has been that of the six systems of Indian philosophy, or *darshanas,* as they are called. Some of these systems were themselves greatly affected by Buddhist thought. All of them are considered orthodox and yet they vary in their approach and their conclusions, though they have many common ideas. There is polytheism, and theism with a personal God, and pure monism, and a system which ignores God altogether and bases itself on a theory of evolution. There is both idealism and realism. The various facets of the complex and inclusive Indian mind are shown in their unity and diversity. Max Müller drew attention to both these factors: ' . . . the more have I become impressed with the truth . . . that there is behind the variety of the six systems a common fund of what may be called national and popular philosophy . . . from which each thinker was allowed to draw for his own purposes.'

There is a common presumption in all of them: that the universe is orderly and functions according to law, that there is a mighty rhythm about it. Some such presumption becomes necessary, for otherwise there could hardly be any system to explain it. Though the law of causality, of cause and effect, functions, yet there is a measure of freedom to the individual to shape his own destiny. There is belief in rebirth and an emphasis

on unselfish love and disinterested activity. Logic and reason are relied upon and used effectively for argument, but it is recognized that often intuition is greater than either. The general argument proceeds on a rational basis, in so far as reason can be applied to matters often outside its scope. Professor Keith has pointed out that 'The systems are indeed orthodox and admit the authority of the sacred scriptures, but they attack the problems of existence with human means, and scripture serves for all practical purposes but to lend sanctity to results which are achieved not only without its aid, but often in very dubious harmony with its tenets.'

EXERCISES

1. The author refers to the thought process as an association of ideas, yet he says, due to the overlapping of thoughts, these often become irreconcilable.
   How does he explain this?
2. a) What, according to the author in this chapter, do people comprising all stages of cultural development represent?
   b) What does the author tell us about the beliefs and set ideas of people in countries which are industrially advanced?
3. The author tells us that the problems that affect daily life in their material aspects are more complex in philosophy and metaphysics.
   In what way does he suggest that these can be understood better by most people?
4. The author says that all of us have some kind of philosophy of life, conscious or unconscious. How do we come by this philosophy and in what ways does it help us?
5. The author suggests that there was probably more unity and harmony in the human personality in the old days and that this

unity has possibly broken up over the ages without succeeding in finding another.
What does modern man do in his search to develop some kind of harmonious personality?

6. What reason does the author ascribe for the old concept of social organization and the philosophy of life underlying it having persisted to the present day in India?
7. 'In India religion is hardly a dogma, but a working hypothesis of human conduct, adapted to different stages of spiritual development and different conditions of life.'
How does such a hypothesis work and what, in the opinion of the author, causes it to lose its vitality and significance?
8. What do metaphysical theories and speculation deal with and how are they influenced by the environment in which they grow?
9. According to the author philosophy has had more of an effect in India than elsewhere in moulding the national outlook.
What roles have Buddhist philosophy and Islam played in this process?
10. What is the common presumption in the various systems of philosophy in India?
11. What role, according to Keith, as quoted by the author, does scripture play in the various systems of philosophy in India?

The Indian Social Structure.
Importance of the Group

In this section, Nehru has examined traditional Indian social organization, in particular, the role and function of the caste system. Nehru was categorical in his rejection of the obvious inequalities and discrimination that it represented. He felt, however, that the new forces in our modern world were undiscriminating in their attacks on the system. Evolved over centuries, the caste system was also the organizing principle that promoted stabilizing group identification in our society. Therefore, to simply condemn and dismantle such a structure was only a part of the task of social renewal in India. There was also the need to simultaneously evolve a suitable alternative basis for collective or group strength, to be a resource for modern Indian society.

Almost everyone who knows anything at all about India has heard of the caste system; almost every outsider and many people in India condemn it or criticize it as a whole. Probably there is hardly anyone left even in India who approves of it in all its present ramifications and developments, though there are undoubtedly many still who accept its basic theory and large numbers of Hindus adhere to it in their lives. Some confusion arises in the use of the word caste for different people attach different meanings to it. The average European, or an Indian who is allied to him in thought and approach, thinks of it as just a petrification of classes, an ingenious method to preserve a certain hierarchy of classes, to keep the upper classes permanently at the top and the lower ones permanently at the bottom of the

scale. There is truth in that and in its origin it was probably a device to keep the Aryan conquerors apart from and above the conquered peoples. Undoubtedly in its growth it has acted in that way, though originally there may have been a good deal of flexibility about it. Yet that is only a part of the truth and it does not explain its power and cohesiveness and the way it has lasted down to our present day. It survived not only the powerful impact of Buddhism and many centuries of Afghan and Mughal rule and the spread of Islam, but also the strenuous efforts of innumerable Hindu reformers who raised their voices against it. It is only today that it is seriously threatened and its very basis has been attacked. That is not chiefly because of some powerful urge to reform itself which has arisen in Hindu society, though such an urge is undoubtedly present, nor is it because of ideas from the West, though such ideas have certainly exerted their influence. The change that is taking place before our eyes is due essentially to basic economic changes which have shaken up the whole fabric of Indian society and are likely to upset it completely. Conditions of life have changed and thought-patterns are changing so much that it seems impossible for the caste system to endure. What will take its place is more than I can say, for something much more than the caste system is at stake. The conflict is between two approaches to the problem of social organization, which are diametrically opposed to each other: the old Hindu conception of the group being the basic unit of organization, and the excessive individualism of the West, emphasizing the individual above the group.

That conflict is not of India only; it is of the West also and of the entire world, though it takes different forms there. The nineteenth century civilization of Europe, taking shape in democratic liberalism and its extensions in the economic and social fields, represented the high-water mark of that individualism. That nineteenth century ideology with its social and political organization has extended itself and flowed into the twentieth century, but it seems wholly out of date now and is cracking under stress of crisis and war. The importance of the group and the community is emphasized more now, and the problem is to reconcile the respective claims of the individual and the group. The solution of that problem may take different forms in different countries, yet there will be an ever- increasing tendency for one basic solution to apply to all.

The caste system does not stand by itself; it is a part, and an integral part, of a much larger scheme of social organization. It may be possible to remove some of its obvious abuses and to lessen its rigidity, and yet to leave the system intact. But that is highly unlikely, as the social and economic forces at play are not much concerned with this superstructure; they are attacking it at the base and undermining the other supports which held it up. Indeed, great parts of these are already gone or are rapidly going, and more and more the caste system is left stranded by itself. It has ceased to be a question of whether we like caste or dislike it. Changes are taking place in spite of our likes and dislikes. But it is certainly in our power to mould those changes and direct them, so that we can take full advantage of the character and genius of the Indian people as a whole,

which have been so evident in the cohesiveness and stability of the social organization they built up.

Sir George Birdwood has said somewhere: 'So long as the Hindus hold to the caste system, India will be India; but from the day they break from it, there will be no more India. That glorious peninsula will be degraded to the position of a bitter "East End" of the Anglo-Saxon Empire.' With caste or without it, we have long been degraded to that position in the British Empire; and, in any event, whatever our future position is likely to be, it will not be confined within the bounds of that Empire. But there is some truth in what Sir George Birdwood said, though probably he did not look at it from this point of view. The break-up of a huge and long standing social organization may well lead to a complete disruption of social life, resulting in absence of cohesion, mass suffering and the development on a vast scale of abnormalities in individual behaviour, unless some other social structure, more suited to the times and to the genius of the people, takes its place. Perhaps disruption is inevitable during the transition period; there is enough of this disruption all over the world today. Perhaps it is only through the pain and suffering that accompany such disruption that a people grow and learn the lessons of life and adapt themselves anew to changing conditions.

Nevertheless, we cannot just disrupt and hope for something better without having some vision of the future we are working for, however vague that vision may be. We cannot just create a vacuum, or else that vacuum will fill itself up in a way that we may have to deplore. In the constructive schemes that we may make,

we have to pay attention to the human material we have to deal with, to the background of its thought and urges, and to the environment in which we have to function. To ignore all this and to fashion some idealistic scheme in the air, or merely to think in terms of imitating what others have done elsewhere, would be folly. It becomes desirable therefore to examine and understand the old Indian social structure which has so powerfully influenced our people.

This structure was based on three concepts: the autonomous village community, caste, and the joint family system. In all these three it is the group that counts; the individual has a secondary place. There is nothing very unique about all this separately and it is easy to find something equivalent to any of these three in other countries, especially in medieval times. Like the old Indian republics, there were primitive republics elsewhere. There was also a kind of primitive communism. The old Russian *mir* might be comparable in some way to the Indian village community. Caste has been essentially functional and similar to the medieval trade guilds of Europe. The Chinese family system bears a strong resemblance to the Hindu joint family. I do not know enough of all these to carry the comparison far, and, in any case, it is not important for my purpose. Taken as a whole the entire Indian structure was certainly unique and, as it developed, it became more so.

EXERCISES

1. What impression does the average European have about the caste system and is there any justification for this impression? If so, what is the justification?
2. Give your impression as to why you think the caste system has survived to the present day despite the fact that it is condemned and criticized by most people.
3. a) What are the changes affecting the caste system according to the author (at the time of his writing) and why does he think that the system will not endure for long?
   b) What would you say about the system in today's context?
4. What, in your opinion, will be the ideal solution in India, to the problem of the old Hindu concept of the group being the basic organization and the excessive individualism of the West?
5. Why do you think the author feels it is highly unlikely that it will be possible to remove some of the obvious abuses of the caste system and yet leave the system intact?
6. What does the author feel will be the implications if the caste system were to break up?
7. Why does the author feel that it will be desirable to examine and understand the old Indian structure which has influenced Indian people so powerfully?
8. List the three concepts on which Indian social structure is based. How do these compare with those of other countries of medieval times?

Synthesis and Growth of Mixed Culture. Purdah. Kabir. Guru Nanak. Amir Khusrau

Nehru did not agree with historians who divided the development of culture in India into several separate periods named or identified with political changes that had occurred as a result of invasion or conquest by foreign elements. To make such a categorization, was to view the development of India's culture as punctuated by sharp divides caused by one-sided changes that had been imposed by a foreign culture. Nehru's view of India's cultural development consisted of seeing it as an unbroken flow that was uninterrupted by sudden changes. Instead, it gradually absorbed and mixed with certain new or foreign forms. The medieval period of Indian history for instance, had been marked by various invasions and conquests. However, this period had witnessed a remarkable process of adjustment and fusion between the new culture and existing Indian society. A small upper section apart, the rest of Indian society was affected by these new forces only very gradually. Over centuries India assimilated aspects of various foreign cultures—even as it influenced those in its turn—and evolved an enriched, constantly changing culture of its own.

It is thus wrong and misleading to talk of a Moslem invasion of India or of the Moslem period in India, just as it would be wrong to refer to the coming of the British to India as a Christian invasion, or to call the British period in India a Christian period. Islam did not invade India; it had come to India some centuries earlier. There was a Turkish invasion (Mahmud's), and an Afghan invasion, and then a Turco-Mongol or Mughal invasion, and of these the two latter were important. The Afghans

might well be considered a border Indian group, hardly strangers to India, and the period of their political dominance should be called the Indo-Afghan period. The Mughals were outsiders and strangers to India and yet they fitted into the Indian structure with remarkable speed and began the Indo-Mughal period.

Through choice or circumstances or both, the Afghan rulers and those who had come with them, merged into India. Their dynasties became completely Indianized with their roots in India, looking upon India as their homeland, and the rest of the world as foreign. In spite of political conflict, they were generally considered as such and many even of the Rajput princes accepted them as their overlords. But there were other Rajput chiefs who refused to submit and there were fierce conflicts. Feroze Shah, one of the well-known Sultans of Delhi, had a Hindu mother; so had Ghyas-ud-Din Tughlak. Such marriages between the Afghans, Turkish, and the Hindu nobility were not frequent, but they did take place. In the South the Moslem ruler of Gulbarga married a Hindu princess of Vijayanagar with great pomp and ceremony.

It appears that in the Moslem countries of Central and Western Asia Indians had a good reputation. As early as the eleventh century, that is, before the Afghan conquest, a Moslem geographer, Idrisi, wrote: 'The Indians are naturally inclined to justice, and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty, and fidelity to their engagements are well-known, and they

are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side.'*

An efficient administration grew up and communications were especially improved, chiefly for military reasons. Government was more centralized now though it took care not to interfere with local customs. Sher Shah (who intervened during the early Mughal period) was the ablest among the Afghan rulers. He laid the foundations of a revenue system which was later to be expanded by Akbar. Raja Todar Mal, Akbar's famous revenue minister, was first employed by Sher Shah. Hindu talent was increasingly used by the Afghan rulers.

The effect of the Afghan conquest on India and Hinduism was two-fold, each development contradicting the other. The immediate reaction was an exodus of people to the south, away from the areas under Afghan rule. Those who remained became more rigid and exclusive, retired into their shells, and tried to protect themselves from foreign ways and influences by hardening the caste system. On the other hand, there was a gradual and hardly conscious approach towards these foreign ways both in thought and life. A synthesis worked itself out: new styles of architecture arose; food and clothing changed; and life was affected and varied in many other ways. This synthesis was especially marked in music, which, following its old Indian classical pattern, developed in many directions. The Persian language became the official court language and many

* *From Sir H. M. Elliot's 'History of India', Vol. 1, p. 88.*

Persian words crept into popular use. At the same time the popular languages were developed.

Among the unfortunate developments that took place in India was the growth of *purdah* or the seclusion of women. Why this should have been so is not clear but somehow it did result from the interaction of the new elements on the old. In India there had been previously some segregation of the sexes among the aristocracy, as in many other countries and notably in ancient Greece. Some such segregation existed in ancient Iran also and to some extent all over Western Asia. But nowhere was there any strict seclusion of women. Probably this started in the Byzantine court circles where eunuchs were employed to guard the women's apartments. Byzantine influence travelled to Russia where there was a fairly strict seclusion of women right up to Peter the Great's time. This had nothing to do with the Tartars who, it is well established, did not segregate their women-folk. The mixed Arab-Persian civilization was affected in many ways by Byzantine customs and possibly the segregation of upper-class women grew to some extent. Yet, even so, there was no strict seclusion of women in Arabia or in other parts of Western or Central Asia. The Afghans, who crowded into Northern India after the capture of Delhi, had no strict purdah. Turkish and Afghan princesses and ladies of the court often went riding, hunting, and paying visits. It is an old Islamic custom, still to be observed, that women must keep their faces unveiled during the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca. Purdah seems to have grown in India during Mughal times, when it became a mark of status and prestige among both Hindus and Moslems. This custom of seclusion of women spread especially among the

upper classes of those areas where Moslem influence had been most marked—in the great central and eastern block comprising Delhi, the United Provinces, Rajputana, Bihar, and Bengal. And yet it is odd that purdah has not been very strict in the Punjab and in the Frontier Province, which are predominantly Moslem. In the south and west of India there has been no such seclusion of women, except to some extent among the Moslems.

I have no doubt at all that among the causes of India's decay in recent centuries, purdah, or the seclusion of women, holds an important place. I am even more convinced that the complete ending of this barbarous custom is essential before India can have a progressive social life. That it injures women is obvious enough, but the injury to man, to the growing child who has to spend much of its time among women in purdah, and to social life generally is equally great. Fortunately this evil practice is fast disappearing among the Hindus, more slowly among the Moslems.

The strongest factor in this liquidation of purdah has been the Congress political and social movements which have drawn tens of thousands of middle-class women into some kind of public activity. Gandhiji has been, and is, a fierce opponent of purdah and has called it a 'vicious and brutal custom' which has kept women backward and undeveloped. 'I thought of the wrong being done by men to the women of India by clinging to a barbarous custom which, whatever use it might have had when it was first introduced, had now become totally useless and was doing incalculable harm to the country.' Gandhiji urged that woman should have the same liberty and opportunity of self- development as

man. 'Good sense must govern the relations between the two sexes. There should be no barrier erected between them. Their mutual behaviour should be natural and spontaneous.' Gandhiji has indeed written and spoken with passion in favour of women's equality and freedom, and has bitterly condemned their domestic slavery.

I have digressed and made a sudden jump to modern times, and must go back to the medieval period after the Afghans had established themselves in Delhi and a synthesis was working itself out between old ways and new. Most of these changes took place at the top, among the nobility and upper classes, and did not affect the mass of the population, especially the rural masses. They originated in court circles and spread in the cities and urban areas. Thus began a process which was to continue for several centuries, of developing a mixed culture in North India. Delhi, and what are known now as the United Provinces, became the centre of this, just as they had been, and still continued to be, the centre of the old Aryan culture. But much of this Aryan culture drifted to the South, which became a stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy.

After the Delhi Sultanate had weakened owing to Timur's incursion, a small Moslem state grew up in Jaunpur (in the United Provinces). Right through the fifteenth century this was a centre of art and culture and toleration in religion. The growing popular language, Hindi, was encouraged, and an attempt was even made to bring about a synthesis between the religious faiths of the Hindus and the Moslems. About this time in far Kashmir in the north, an independent Moslem King, Zainulabdin, also became famous for his toleration and

his encouragement of Sanskrit learning and the old culture.

All over India this new ferment was working and new ideas were troubling people's minds. As of old, India was subconsciously reacting to the new situation, trying to absorb the foreign element and herself changing somewhat in the process. Out of this ferment arose new types of reformers who deliberately preached this synthesis and often condemned or ignored the caste system. There was the Hindu Ramanand in the South, in the fifteenth century, and his still more famous disciple Kabir, a Moslem weaver of Benares. Kabir's poems and songs became, and still are, very popular. In the North there was Guru Nanak, who is considered the founder of Sikhism. The influence of these reformers went far beyond the limits of the particular sects that grew up after them. Hinduism as a whole felt the impact of the new ideas, and Islam in India also became somewhat different from what it was elsewhere. The fierce monotheism of Islam influenced Hinduism and the vague pantheistic attitude of the Hindu had its effect on the Indian Moslem. Most of these Indian Moslems were converts bred up in and surrounded by the old traditions; only a comparatively small number of them had come from outside. Moslem mysticism, and Sufism, which probably had had its beginnings in neo-Platonism, grew.

Perhaps the most significant indication of the growing absorption of the foreign element in India was its use of the popular language of the country, even though Persian continued to be the court language. There are many notable books written by the early Moslems in

Hindi. The most famous of these writers was Amir Khusrau, a Turk whose family had settled in the United Provinces for two or three generations and who lived in the fourteenth century during the reigns of several Afghan Sultans. He was a poet of the first rank in Persian, and he knew Sanskrit also. He was a great musician and introduced many innovations in Indian music. He is also said to have invented the *sitar*, the popular stringed instrument of India. He wrote on many subjects and, in particular, in praise of India, enumerating the various things in which India excelled. Among these were religion, philosophy, logic, language, and grammar (Sanskrit), music, mathematics, science and the mango fruit!

But his fame in India rests, above all, on his popular songs, written in the ordinary spoken dialect of Hindi. Wisely he did not choose the literary medium which would have been understood by a small coterie only; he went to the villager not only for his language but for his customs and ways of living. He sang of the different seasons and each season, according to the old classical style of India, had its own appropriate tune and words; he sang of life in its various phases, of the coming of the bride, of separation from the beloved, of the rains when life springs anew from the parched earth. Those songs are still widely sung and may be heard in any village or town in Northern or Central India. Especially when the rainy season begins and in every village big swings are hung from the branches of the mango or the peepul trees, and all the village girls and boys gather together to celebrate the occasion.

Amir Khusrau was the author also of innumerable riddles and conundrums which are very popular with

children as well as grown-ups. Even during his long life Khusrau's songs and riddles had made him famous. That reputation has continued and grown. I do not know if there is any other instance anywhere of songs written six hundred years ago maintaining their popularity and their mass appeal and being still sung without any change of words.

EXERCISES

1. Why does the author think it is 'wrong and misleading' to talk of a 'Moslem period in India'?
2. The author feels that the period of political dominance of the Afghans should be called the Indo-Afghan period. How does he justify this statement?
3. Why do you think the Afghan rulers were generally accepted as overlords in India?
4. How does the Moslem geographer, Idrisi, describe the Indians of that era?
5. The Afghan conquest, says the author, had a two-fold effect on India and Hinduism. What was this two-fold effect and how did it eventually work out?
6. a) When did the purdah system come into India?
   b) Give some examples to show that no strict purdah system prevailed among Indians or the Afghans prior to this custom having spread in India.
7. What does the author feel are the evils of the purdah system?
8. What role did the Congress and social movements play in breaking the purdah system?
9. What does the author tell us of Gandhiji's views on the purdah system?
10. Briefly describe the changes which took place in India after the Afghans had established themselves in Delhi.

11. We are told of reformers emerging with new ideas created by the synthesis of the old and the new. Who are cited by the author as reformers and what does he tell us about them?
12. Why does the author describe the Indian Moslems as being different from conventional Moslems elsewhere?
13. What information do we get about Amir Khusrau who was one of many Moslems who wrote notable books in Hindi?
14. Why do you think Amir Khusrau was wise in the selection of the language in which he wrote and the choice of topics for his songs?

Growth and Decay

In its maturity, wrote Nehru, the civilization of Ancient India was a well developed national culture with a variety of creative achievements to its credit. A degeneration or loss of vitality had however set in very gradually, over many centuries. This decay of Indian culture, evident far earlier in Northern India, had resulted from internal problems rather than political change and disruption from without. Older social forms, like the caste system that had earlier produced stability, had outlasted their usefulness. The rigidity of attitudes and cultural stagnation that such structures had produced now needed to be reformed so that Indian culture could truly move ahead.

During the first thousand years of the Christian era, there are many ups and downs in India, many conflicts with invading elements and internal troubles. Yet it is a period of a vigorous national life, bubbling over with energy and spreading out in all directions. Culture develops into a rich civilization flowering out in philosophy, literature, drama, art, science, and mathematics. India's economy expands, the Indian horizon widens and other countries come within its scope. Contacts grow with Iran, China, the Hellenic world, Central Asia, and, above all, there is a powerful urge towards the eastern seas which leads to the establishment of Indian colonies and the spread of Indian culture far beyond India's boundaries. During the middle period of this millennium, from early in the fourth to the sixth century, the Gupta Empire flourishes and becomes the patron and symbol of this widespread intellectual and artistic activity. It is called the Golden or Classical Age of India and the writings of that period, which are classics in Sanskrit literature, reveal a serenity, a quiet

confidence of the people in themselves, and a glow of pride at being privileged to be alive in that high noon of civilization, and with it the urge to use their great intellectual and artistic powers to the utmost.

Yet even before that Golden Age had come to a close, signs of weakness and decay become visible. The White Huns come from the north-west in successive hordes and are repeatedly pushed back. But they come again and again and eat their way slowly into North India. For a half-century they even establish themselves as a ruling power all over the North. But then, with a great effort, the last of the great Guptas, joining up in a confederacy with Yashovarman, a ruler of Central India, drives out the Huns.

This long-drawn-out conflict weakened India politically and militarily, and probably the settlement of large numbers of these Huns all over northern India gradually produced an inner change in the people. They were absorbed as all foreign elements had so far been absorbed, but they left their impress and weakened the old ideals of the Indo-Aryan races. Old accounts of the Huns are full of their excessive cruelty and barbarous behaviour which were so foreign to Indian standards of warfare and government.

In the seventh century there was a revival and renaissance under Harsha, both political and cultural. Ujjayini (modern Ujjain), which had been the brilliant capital of the Guptas, again became a centre of art and culture and the seat of a powerful kingdom. But in the centuries that followed, this too weakens and fades off. In the ninth century Mihira Bhoja, of Gujrat, consolidates a unified state in North and Central India with

his capital at Kanauj. There is another literary revival of which the central figure is Rajashekhara. Again, at the beginning of the eleventh century, another Bhoja stands out as a powerful and attractive figure, and Ujjayini again becomes a great capital. This Bhoja was a remarkable man who distinguished himself in many fields. He was a grammarian and a lexicographer, and interested in medicine and astronomy. He was a builder and patron of art and literature, and was himself a poet and a writer to whom many works are attributed. His name has become a part of popular fable and legend as a symbol of greatness, learning, and generosity.

And yet for all these bright patches, an inner weakness seems to seize India, which affects not only her political status but her creative activities. There is no date for this, for the process was a slow and creeping one, and it affected North India earlier than the South. The South indeed becomes more important both politically and culturally. Perhaps this was due to the South having escaped the continuous strain of fighting waves of invaders; perhaps many of the writers and artists and master-builders migrated to the South to escape from the unsettled conditions in the North. The powerful kingdoms of the South, with their brilliant courts, must have attracted these people and given them opportunities for creative work which they lacked elsewhere.

But though the North did not dominate India, as it had often done in the past, and was split up into small states, life was still rich there and there were many centres of cultural and philosophic activity. Benares, as ever, was the heart of religious and philosophical thought, and every person who advanced a new theory

or a new interpretation of an old theory, had to come there to justify himself. Kashmir was for long a great Sanskrit centre of Buddhist and Brahminical learning. The great universities flourished; of these, Nalanda, the most famous of all, was respected for its scholarship all over India. To have been to Nalanda was a hall-mark of culture. It was not easy to enter that university, for admission was restricted to those who had already attained a certain standard. It specialized in postgraduate study and attracted students from China, Japan, and Tibet, and even it is said, from Korea and Mongolia and Bokhara. Apart from religious and philosophical subjects (both Buddhist and Brahminical), secular and practical subjects were also taught. There was a school of art and a department for architecture; a medical school; an agricultural department; dairy farms and cattle. The intellectual life of the university is said to have been one of animated debates and discussions. The spread of Indian culture abroad was largely the work of scholars from Nalanda.

Then there was the Vikramshila University, near modern Bhagalpur in Bihar, and Vallabhi in Kathiawar. During the period of the Guptas, the Ujjayini University rose into prominence. In the South there was the Amravati University.

Yet, as the millennium approached its end, all this appears to be the afternoon of a civilization; the glow of the morning had long faded away, high noon was past. In the South there was still vitality and vigour and this lasted for some centuries more; in the Indian colonies abroad there was aggressive and full-blooded life right up to the middle of the next millennium. But the heart

seems to petrify, its beats are slower, and gradually this petrification and decay spread to the limbs. There is no great figure in philosophy after Shankara in the eighth century, though there is a long succession of commentators and dialecticians. Even Shankara came from the South. The sense of curiosity and the spirit of mental adventure give place to a hard and formal logic and a sterile dialectic. Both Brahminism and Buddhism deteriorate and degraded forms of worship grow up, especially some varieties of Tantric worship and perversions of the Yoga system.

In literature, Bhavabhuti (eighth century) is the last great figure. Many books continued to be written, but their style becomes more and more involved and intricate; there is neither freshness of thought nor of expression. In mathematics, Bhaskara II (twelfth century) is the last great name. In art, E. B. Havell takes us rather beyond this period. He says that the form of expression was not artistically perfected until about the seventh and eighth centuries, when most of the great sculpture and painting in India was produced. From the seventh or eighth to the fourteenth century, according to him, was the great period of Indian art, corresponding to the highest development of Gothic art in Europe. He adds that it was in the sixteenth century that the creative impulse of the old Indian art began markedly to diminish. How far this judgement is correct I do not know, but I imagine that even in the field of art it was South India that carried on the old tradition for a longer period than the North.

The last of the major emigrations for colonial settlement took place from South India in the ninth century,

but the Cholas in the South continued to be a great sea power till the eleventh century, when they defeated and conquered Srivijaya.

We thus see that India was drying up and losing her creative genius and vitality. The process was a slow one and lasted several centuries, beginning in the North and finally reaching the South. What were the causes of this political decline and cultural stagnation? Was this due to age alone, that seems to attack civilizations as it does individuals, or to a kind of tidal wave with its forward and backward motion? Or were external causes and invasions responsible for it? Radhakrishnan says that Indian philosophy lost its vigour with the loss of political freedom. Sylvain Lévi writes: 'La culture sanscrite a fini avec la liberté de l'Inde; des langues nouvelles, des littératures nouvelles ont envahi la territoire aryenne, et l'en ont chassé; elle s'est réfugiée dans les colléges et y a pris un air pédantesque.'*

All this is true, for the loss of political freedom leads inevitably to cultural decay. But why should political freedom be lost unless some kind of decay has preceded it? A small country might easily be overwhelmed by superior power, but a huge, well-developed and highly civilized country like India cannot succumb to external attack unless there is internal decay, or the invader possesses a higher technique of warfare. That internal

* *'Sanskrit culture ended when India lost her freedom; many new languages and their budding writers invaded the old Aryan stronghold (of Sanskrit). Sanskrit was now a presence only in colleges and gradually became the preserve of the pedantic.'*

decay is clearly evident in India at the close of these thousand years.

There are repeatedly periods of decay and disruption in the life of every civilization, and there had been such periods in Indian history previously; but India had survived them and rejuvenated herself afresh, sometimes retiring into her shell for a while and emerging again with fresh vigour. There always remained a dynamic core which could renew itself with fresh contacts and develop again, something different from the past and yet intimately connected with it. Had that capacity for adaptation, that flexibility of mind which had saved India so often in the past left her now? Had her fixed beliefs and the growing rigidity of her social structure made her mind also rigid? For if life ceases to grow and evolve, the evolution of thought also ceases. India had all along been a curious combination of conservatism in practice and explosive thought. Inevitably that thought affected the practice, though it did so in its own way without irreverence for the past. 'Mais si leurs yeux suivaient les mots anciens, leur intelligence y voyait des idées nouvelles. L'Inde s'est transformée a son insu.'* But when thought lost its explosiveness and creative power and became a tame attendant on an outworn and meaningless practice, mumbling old phrases and fearful of everything new, then life became stagnant and tied and constrained in a prison of its own making.

* *'If their eyes followed the words of the ancients, their intelligence grasped these new thoughts. Thus did India transform herself from within.'*

We have many examples of the collapse of a civilization, and perhaps the most notable of these is that of the European classical civilization which ended with the fall of Rome. Long before Rome fell to the invaders from the North, it had been on the verge of collapse from its own internal weaknesses. Its economy, once expanding, had shrunk and brought all manner of difficulties in its train. Urban industries decayed, flourishing cities grew progressively smaller and impoverished, and even fertility rapidly declined. The Emperors tried many expedients to overcome their ever-increasing difficulties. There was compulsory state regulation of merchants, craftsmen, and workers, who were tied down to particular employments. Many kinds of employment were forbidden to those outside certain groups of workers. Thus some occupations were practically converted into castes. The peasantry became serfs. But all these superficial attempts to check the decline failed and even worsened conditions; and the Roman Empire collapsed.

There was and has been no such dramatic collapse of Indian civilization, and it has shown an amazing staying power despite all that has happened; but a progressive decline is visible. It is difficult to specify in any detail what the social conditions in India were at the end of the first millennium after Christ; but it may be said with some assurance that the expanding economy of India had ended and there was a strong tendency to shrink. Probably this was the inevitable result of the growing rigidity and exclusiveness of the Indian social structure as represented chiefly by the caste system. Where Indians had gone abroad, as in South-East Asia, they were not so rigid in mind or

customs or in their economy, and they had opportunities for growth and expansion. For another four or five hundred years they flourished in these colonies and displayed energy and creative vigour; but in India herself the spirit of exclusiveness sapped the creative faculty and developed a narrow, small-group, and parochial outlook. Life became cut up into set frames, where each man's job was fixed and permanent and he had little concern with others. It was the Kshatriya's business to fight in defence of the country, and others were not interested or were not even allowed to do so. The Brahmin and the Kshatriya looked down on trade and commerce. Education and opportunities of growth were withheld from the lower castes, who were taught to be submissive to those higher up in the scale. In spite of a well-developed urban economy and industries, the structure of the state was in many ways feudal. Probably even in the technique of warfare India had fallen behind. No marked progress was possible under these conditions without changing that structure and releasing fresh sources of talent and energy. The caste system was a barrier to such a change. For all its virtues and the stability it had given to Indian society, it carried within it the seeds of destruction.

The Indian social structure (and I shall consider this more fully later) had given amazing stability to Indian civilization. It had given strength and cohesion to the group, but this came in the way of expansion and a larger cohesion. It developed crafts and skill and trade and commerce, but always within each group separately. Thus particular types of activity became hereditary and there was a tendency to avoid new types of work

and activity and to confine oneself to the old groove, to restrict initiative and the spirit of innovation. It gave a measure of freedom within a certain limited sphere, but at the expense of the growth of a larger freedom and at the heavy price of keeping large numbers of people permanently at the bottom of the social ladder, deprived of the opportunities of growth. So long as that structure afforded avenues for growth and expansion, it was progressive; when it reached the limits of expansion open to it, it became stationary, unprogressive, and, later, inevitably regressive.

Because of this there was decline all along the line—intellectual, philosophical, political, in techniques and methods of warfare, in knowledge of and contacts with the outside world, and there was a growth of local sentiments and feudal, small-group feeling at the expense of the larger conception of India as a whole, and a shrinking economy. Yet, as later ages were to show, there was yet vitality in the old structure and an amazing tenacity, as well as some flexibility and capacity for adaptation. Because of this it managed to survive and to profit by new contacts and waves of thought, and even progress in some ways. But that progress was always tied down to and hampered by far too many relics of the past.

EXERCISES

1. The first thousand years of the Christian era in India are described 'as a period of vigorous national life, bubbling over with energy and spreading out in all directions'.

List the developments which took place in India, over the above period, as detailed by the author.

2. The author talks of 'The Golden or Classical Age of India'.
   a) What age is the author referring to?
   b) Why do you think this period is referred to as 'The Golden or Classical Age of India'?
   c) What were the signs of weakness and decay which had become visible even before the close of 'The Golden or Classical Age' referred to above?
3. What information does the author give us about the revival and renaissance under Harsha?
4. a) Who consolidated a unified state in Northern and Central India?
   b) Which part of India did he come from?
   c) Where did he establish his capital?
   d) In which century did the above development take place?
5. Another Bhoja stands out as a powerful and attractive figure with his capital at Ujjayini at the beginning of the eleventh century.
   List some of the interests and achievements of this Bhoja who distinguished himself in many fields.
6. What possible reasons does the author ascribe for the South becoming more important both politically and culturally?
7. What information do we get about the importance of:
   i) Benares?
   ii) Kashmir?
   iii) Other universities of repute during that era?
8. According to E. B. Havell, says the author, the great period of Indian art was between the seventh or eighth to the fourteenth century.
   What information do we get from this chapter on art in India?
9. What insights does the author give us into the slow process of the deterioration and decay that had set in and which eventually resulted in the apparent collapse of civilization in India? What were the reasons for the above phenomenon according to the author?

10. The author tells us that no dramatic collapse had taken place of Indian civilization.
    What does he say had happened?
11. How had the Indian social structure given stability to Indian civilization?
12. What causes does the author outline as being responsible for a general decline in Indian civilization?

The Variety and Unity of India

Nehru observed that it was the diversity of India, both in the nature of its terrain as well as its people that most struck the eye. The differences in race, custom, habit and language that existed between the various regions in India were astonishing. However, underlying all these differences, wrote Nehru, there existed a single heritage. All Indians shared a common cultural background and values, that were characterized by tolerance and coexistence. This common way of thinking had accommodated and integrated even the sharpest differences in custom and belief. These differences had shaped and in turn had been shaped by a gradually evolving national culture.

The diversity of India is tremendous; it is obvious; it lies on the surface and anybody can see it. It concerns itself with physical appearances as well as with certain mental habits and traits. There is little in common, to outward seeming, between the Pathan of the North-West and the Tamil in the far South. Their racial stocks are not the same, though there may be common strands running through them; they differ in face and figure, food and clothing, and, of course, language. In the North-Western Frontier Province there is already the breath of Central Asia, and many a custom there, as in Kashmir, reminds one of the countries on the other side of the Himalayas. Pathan popular dances are singularly like Russian Cossack dancing. Yet, with all these differences, there is no mistaking the impress of India on the Pathan, as this is obvious on the Tamil. This is not surprising, for these border lands, and indeed Afghanistan also, were united with India for thousands of years.

The old Turkish and other races who inhabited Afghanistan and parts of Central Asia before the advent of Islam were largely Buddhists, and earlier still, during the period of the Epics, Hindus. The frontier area was one of the principal centres of old Indian culture and it abounds still with ruins of monuments and monasteries and, especially, of the great university of Taxila, which was at the height of its fame two thousand years ago, attracting students from all over India as well as different parts of Asia. Changes of religion made a difference, but could not change entirely the mental backgrounds which the people of those areas had developed.

The Pathan and the Tamil are two extreme examples; the others lie somewhere in between. All of them have their distinctive features, all of them have still more the distinguishing mark of India. It is fascinating to find how the Bengalis, the Marathas, the Gujratis, the Tamils, the Andhras, the Oriyas, the Assamese, the Canarese, the Malayalis, the Sindhis, the Punjabis, the Pathans, the Kashmiris, the Rajputs, and the great central block comprising the Hindustani- speaking people, have retained their peculiar characteristics for hundreds of years, have still more or less the same virtues and failings of which old tradition or record tells us, and yet have been throughout these ages distinctively Indian, with the same national heritage and the same set of moral and mental qualities. There was something living and dynamic about this heritage which showed itself in ways of living and a philosophical attitude to life and its problems. Ancient India, like ancient China, was a world in itself, a culture and a civilization which

gave shape to all things. Foreign influences poured in and often influenced that culture and were absorbed. Disruptive tendencies gave rise immediately to an attempt to find a synthesis. Some kind of a dream of unity has occupied the mind of India since the dawn of civilization. That unity was not conceived as something imposed from outside, a standardization of externals or even of beliefs. It was something deeper and, within its fold, the widest tolerance of belief and custom was practised and every variety acknowledged and even encouraged.

Differences, big or small, can always be noticed even within a national group, however closely bound together it may be. The essential unity of that group becomes apparent when it is compared to another national group, though often the differences between two adjoining groups fade out or intermingle near the frontiers, and modern developments are tending to produce a certain uniformity everywhere. In ancient and medieval times, the idea of the modern nation was non-existent, and feudal, religious, racial, or cultural bonds had more importance. Yet I think that at almost any time in recorded history an Indian would have felt more or less at home in any part of India, and would have felt as a stranger and alien in any other country. He would certainly have felt less of a stranger in countries which had partly adopted his culture or religion. Those who professed a religion of non-Indian origin or, coming to India, settled down there, became distinctively Indian in the course of a few generations, such as Christians, Jews, Parsees, Moslems. Indian converts to some of these religions never ceased to be

Indians on account of a change of their faith. They were looked upon in other countries as Indians and foreigners, even though there might have been a community of faith between them.

Today, when the conception of nationalism has developed much more, Indians in foreign countries inevitably form a national group and hang together for various purposes, in spite of their internal differences. An Indian Christian is looked upon as an Indian wherever he may go. An Indian Moslem is considered an Indian in Turkey or Arabia or Iran, or any other country where Islam is the dominant religion.

All of us, I suppose, have varying pictures of our native land and no two persons will think exactly alike. When I think of India, I think of many things: of broad fields dotted with innumerable small villages; of towns and cities I have visited; of the magic of the rainy season which pours life into the dry parched-up land and converts it suddenly into a glistening expanse of beauty and greenery, of great rivers and flowing water; of the Khyber Pass in all its bleak surroundings; of the southern tip of India; of people, individually and in the mass; and, above all, of the Himalayas, snow-capped, or some mountain valley in Kashmir in the spring, covered with new flowers, and with a brook bubbling and gurgling through it. We make and preserve the pictures of our choice, and so I have chosen this mountain background rather than the more normal picture of a hot, subtropical country. Both pictures would be correct, for India stretches from the tropics right up to the temperate regions, from near the equator to the cold heart of Asia.

EXERCISES

1. List the traits given by the author concerning the physical as well as certain habits and traits of Indians which he uses to illustrate the tremendous diversity of India.
2. What examples does the author give us to show the similarity between neighbouring countries and the different regions in India?
3. 'Differences, big or small, can always be noticed even within a national group, however closely bound together it may be.' In the context of the above, show how the author illustrates the statement.
4. Describe briefly the pictures which come to the mind of the author when he thinks of India.
5. The author tells us that he has chosen the background of the Himalayas to preserve as his mental picture of India.
   a) Can you give some reasons why you think he made this choice?
   b) How was this choice honoured after the death of the author?

   N.B. The answers to questions 5(a) and (b) above are not mentioned in this chapter.

India's Urge to Freedom

Looking back at Indian experiences with the invaders from the Greeks to the Mughals, Nehru was certain that the Indian people had never treated foreign instrusions with either passivity or resignation. On the one hand, their approach had consisted of active resistance or opposition to all that threatened their national culture. At the same time, there had also been a process of cultural assimilation and fusion. Certain new elements were absorbed and were made part of a renewed Indian culture. Whether putting forward resistance, or forging a synthesis India had always reacted independently.

The East bowed low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

So says the poet and his lines are often quoted. It is true that the East, or at any rate that part of it which is called India, has been enamoured of thinking, often of thinking about matters which to those who consider themselves practical men seem absurd and pointless. She has always honoured thought and the men of thought, the highbrows, and has refused to consider the men of the sword or the possessors of money as superior to them. Even in her days of degradation, she has clung to thought and found some comfort in it.

But it is not true that India has ever bowed patiently before the blast or been indifferent to the passage of foreign legions. Always she has resisted them, often successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully, and even when she failed for the time being, she has remembered and prepared herself for the next attempt. Her method has

been two-fold: to fight them and drive them out, and to absorb those who could not be driven away. She resisted, with considerable success, Alexander's legions, and immediately after his death drove out the Greek garrisons in the north. Later she absorbed the Indo-Greeks and the Indo-Scythians and ultimately again established a national hegemony. She fought the Huns for generations and drove them out; such as remained being absorbed. When the Arabs came they stopped near the Indus. The Turks and Afghans spread further only gradually. It look them several centuries to establish themselves firmly on the throne of Delhi. It was a continuous, long drawn-out conflict and, while this struggle was going on, the other process of absorption and Indianization was also at work, ending in the invaders becoming as much Indian as anyone else. Akbar became the great representative of the old Indian ideal of a synthesis of differing elements and their fusion into a common nationality. He identified himself with India, and India took to him although he was a newcomer; because of this he built well and laid the foundations of a splendid empire. So long as his successors kept in line with this policy and with the genius of the nation, their empire endured. When they broke away and opposed the whole drift of national development, they weakened and their empire went to pieces. New movements arose, narrow in outlook but representing a resurgent nationalism, and though they were not strong enough to build permanently, they were capable of destroying the empire of the Mughals. They were successful for a time, but they looked too much to the past and thought in terms of reviving it. They did

not realize that much had happened which they could not ignore or pass by, that the past can never take the place of the present, that even that present in the India of their day was one of stagnation and decay. It had lost touch with the changing world and left India far behind. They did not appreciate that a new and vital world was arising in the West, based on a new outlook and on new techniques, and a new power, the British, represented that new world of which they were so ignorant. The British triumphed, but hardly had they established themselves in the North when the great mutiny broke out and developed into a war of independence, and nearly put an end to British rule. The urge to freedom, to independence, has always been there, and the refusal to submit to alien domination.

EXERCISES

1. 'The East bowed low before the blast
   In patient, deep disdain;
   She let the legions thunder past,
   And plunged in thought again.'
   How does the author justify that the above lines are not really applicable to India?

2. a) What do we learn from this chapter about Akbar's efforts to implement national integration between the people of India and the Mughals?
   b) What resulted when his successors opposed national integration?

3. Why do you think the British were able to establish their power in India and why did it eventually result in the mutiny which developed into a war of independence?
4. 'The urge to freedom, to independence, has always been there and the refusal to submit to alien domination.'
   Do you subscribe to the above statement as far as India is concerned? Justify your point of view in the context of what you have read in this chapter.

'Bharat Mata'

In his travels across India's villages, Nehru attempted to make people aware of all that various parts of India had in common, both in their problems as well as collective solutions. He believed that it was vital the Indian people conceive of India as a whole and a unity. They also needed to believe that India's spirit, 'Bharat Mata', was none other than its own people. Having acknowledged these ties, the Indian people would finally be able to draw strength from the knowledge of their oneness and work towards a future beyond their immediate surroundings, and needs, for the Indian nation.

Often, as I wandered from meeting to meeting, I spoke to my audience of this India of ours, of Hindustan and of *Bharat*, the old Sanskrit name derived from the mythical founder of the race. I seldom did so in the cities, for there the audiences were more sophisticated and wanted stronger fare. But to the peasant, with his limited outlook, I spoke of this great country for whose freedom we were struggling, of how each part differed from the other and yet was India, of common problems of the peasants from north to south and east to west, of the *Swaraj* that could only be for all and every part and not for some. I told them of my journeying from the Khyber Pass in the far north-west to *Kanya Kumari* or Cape Comorin in the distant south, and how everywhere the peasants put me identical questions, for their troubles were the same—poverty, debt, vested interests, landlords, moneylenders, heavy rents and taxes, police harassment, and all these wrapped up in the structure that the foreign government had imposed upon us—and relief must also come for all. I tried to make them think of India as a whole, and even to some

little extent of this wide world of which we were a part. I brought in the struggle in China, in Spain, in Abyssinia, in Central Europe, in Egypt and the countries of Western Asia. I told them of the wonderful changes in the Soviet Union and of the great progress made in America. The task was not easy; yet it was not so difficult as I had imagined, for our ancient epics and myths and legends, which they knew so well, had made them familiar with the conception of their country, and some there were always who had travelled far and wide to the great places of pilgrimage situated at the four corners of India. Or there were old soldiers who had served in foreign parts in World War I or other expeditions. Even my references to foreign countries were brought home to them by the consequences of the great depression of the 'thirties.

Sometimes as I reached a gathering, a great roar of welcome would greet me: *Bharat Mata ki Jai*—'Victory to Mother India.' I would ask them unexpectedly what they meant by that cry, who was this *Bharat Mata*, Mother India, whose victory they wanted? My question would amuse them and surprise them, and then, not knowing exactly what to answer, they would look at each other and at me. I persisted in my questioning. At last a vigorous Jat, wedded to the soil from immemorial generations, would say that it was the *dharti*, the good earth of India, that they meant. What earth? Their particular village patch, or all the patches in the district or province, or in the whole of India? And so question and answer went on, till they would ask me impatiently to tell them all about it. I would endeavour to do so and explain that India was all this that they had thought, but

it was much more. The mountains and the rivers of India, and the forests and the broad fields, which gave us food, were all dear to us, but what counted ultimately were the people of India, people like them and me, who were spread out all over this vast land. *Bharat Mata,* Mother India, was essentially these millions of people, and victory to her meant victory to these people. You are parts of this *Bharat Mata,* I told them, you are in a manner yourselves *Bharat Mata,* and as this idea slowly soaked into their brains, their eyes would light up as if they had made a great discovery.

EXERCISES

1. What was the Sanskrit name of India derived from the mythical founder of the race?
2. Why did the author seldom speak of India when he spoke in cities?
3. Why did the author speak of India to the peasant?
4. What were the main points emphasized by the author when he spoke to the peasantry of our great country for whose freedom they were struggling?
5. What, according to the author, were the main troubles faced by the peasants throughout India during the rule of a foreign government?
6. Why did the author find that it was not too difficult to make the people think of India as a whole?
7. What was the reaction of gatherings when the author asked them what they meant by the slogan 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and what answer did he get?

8. What method did the author use to get gatherings, who had come to hear him, to tell him about India as they knew her?
9. What did the author tell the gatherings about India that resulted in their eyes lighting up on their realizing that they had made a great discovery?

Religion, Philosophy, and Science

Nehru wrote, that all three forces, religion, philosophy, and science, needed to be applied equally in our lives so that individual and society existed with a harmony of the mind as well as of the body. In India as in the West, these forces had ceased to play a complete and positive role. We had benefited from the scientific method and its innovations but failed to adopt a scientific way of thinking. Like science, philosophy too had fallen short in its contribution. It had restricted itself to abstractions and not shown its practical relevance. Religion in its institutionalized form, had proved a closed way of thinking. Yet all these elements were crucial to our life and needed to be reformed. The questioning scientific spirit, with its search for knowledge, needed to be extended to the realm of philosophy. Religion was important in explaining what lay beyond observation and experience, and in providing a source of emotional strength. Its influence was, however, to be strictly confined to this area alone.

It was in this fashion that Indians needed to mould their culture. The scientific temper Indians had earlier needed to be revived. Much that had become stagnant or irrelevant in Indian society and religion needed discarding.

India must break with much of her past and not allow it to dominate the present. Our lives are encumbered with the dead wood of this past; all that is dead and has served its purpose has to go. But that does not mean a break with, or a forgetting of, the vital and life-giving in that past. We can never forget the ideals that have moved our race, the dreams of the Indian people through the ages, the wisdom of the ancients, the buoyant energy and love of life and nature of our forefathers, their spirit of curiosity and mental adventure, the daring of their thought, their splendid

achievements in literature, art and culture, their love of truth and beauty and freedom, the basic values that they set up, their understanding of life's mysterious ways, their toleration of other ways than theirs, their capacity to absorb other peoples and their cultural accomplishments, to synthesize them and develop a varied and mixed culture; nor can we forget the myriad experiences which have built up our ancient race and lie embedded in our subconscious minds. We will never forget them or cease to take pride in that noble heritage of ours. If India forgets them she will no longer remain India and much that has made her our joy and pride will cease to be.

It is not this that we have to break with, but all the dust and dirt of ages that have covered her up and hidden her inner beauty and significance, the excrescences and abortions that have twisted and petrified her spirit, set it in rigid frames, and stunted her growth. We have to cut away these excrescences and remember afresh the core of that ancient wisdom and adapt it to our present circumstances. We have to get out of traditional ways of thought and living which, for all the good they may have done in a past age, and there was much good in them, have ceased to have significance today. We have to make our own all the achievements of the human race and join up with others in the exciting adventures of man, more exciting today perhaps than in earlier ages, realizing that this has ceased to be governed by national boundaries or old divisions and is common to the race of man everywhere. We have to revive the passion for truth and beauty and freedom which gives meaning to life, and develop afresh that dynamic outlook and spirit of adventure which distinguished those of our

race who, in ages past, built our house on these strong and enduring foundations. Old as we are, with memories stretching back to the early dawns of human history and endeavour, we have to grow young again, in tune with our present time, with the irrepressible spirit and joy of youth in the present and its faith in the future.

Truth as ultimate reality, if such there is, must be eternal, imperishable, unchanging. But that infinite, eternal and unchanging truth cannot be apprehended in its fullness by the finite mind of man which can only grasp, at most, some small aspect of it limited by time and space, and by the state of development of that mind and the prevailing ideology of the period. As the mind develops and enlarges its scope, as ideologies change and new symbols are used to express that truth, new aspects of it come to light, though the core of it may yet be the same. And so, truth has ever to be sought and renewed, reshaped, and developed, so that, as understood by man, it might keep in line with the growth of his thought and the development of human life. Only then does it become a living truth for humanity, supplying the essential need for which it craves, and offering guidance in the present and for the future.

But if some one aspect of the truth has been petrified by dogma in a past age, it ceases to grow and develop and adapt itself to the changing needs of humanity; other aspects of it remain hidden and it fails to answer the urgent questions of a succeeding age. It is no longer dynamic but static, no longer a life-giving impulse but dead thought and ceremonial and a hindrance to the growth of the mind and of humanity. Indeed, it is

probably not even understood to the extent it was understood in that past age when it grew up and was clothed in the language and symbols of that age. For its context is different in a later age, the mental climate has changed, new social habits and customs have grown up, and it is often difficult to understand the sense, much less the spirit, of that ancient writing. Moreover, as Aurobindo Ghose has pointed out, every truth, however true in itself, yet taken apart from others which at once limit and complete it, becomes a snare to bind the intellect and a misleading dogma; for in reality each is one thread of a complex weft and no thread must be taken apart from the weft.

Religions have helped greatly in the development of humanity. They have laid down values and standards and have pointed out principles for the guidance of human life. But with all the good they have done, they have also tried to imprison truth in set forms and dogmas, and encouraged ceremonials and practices which soon lose all their original meaning and become mere routine. While impressing upon man the awe and mystery of the unknown that surrounds him on all sides, they have discouraged him from trying to understand not only the unknown but what might come in the way of social effort. Instead of encouraging curiosity and thought, they have preached a philosophy of submission to nature, to established churches, to the prevailing social order, and to everything that is. The belief in a supernatural agency which ordains everything has led to a certain irresponsibility on the social plane, and emotion and sentimentality have taken the place of reasoned thought and inquiry. Religion, though it has undoubtedly brought comfort to innumerable

human beings and stabilized society by its values, has checked the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society.

Philosophy has avoided many of these pitfalls and encouraged thought and inquiry. But it has usually lived in its ivory tower cut off from life and its day-to-day problems, concentrating on ultimate purposes and failing to link them with the life of man. Logic and reason were its guides and they took it far in many directions, but that logic was too much the product of the mind and unconcerned with fact.

Science ignored the ultimate purposes and looked at fact alone. It made the world jump forward with a leap, built up a glittering civilization, opened up innumerable avenues for the growth of knowledge, and added to the power of man to such an extent that for the first time it was possible to conceive that man could triumph over and shape his physical environment. Man became almost a geological force, changing the face of the planet earth chemically, physically, and in many other ways. Yet when this sorry scheme of things entirely seemed to be in his grasp, to mould it nearer to the heart's desire, there was some essential lack and some vital element was missing. There was no knowledge of ultimate purposes and not even an understanding of the immediate purpose, for science had told us nothing about any purpose in life. Nor did man, so powerful in his control of nature, have the power to control himself, and the monster he had created ran amok. Perhaps new developments in biology, psychology, and similar sciences, and the interpretation of biology and physics, may help man to understand and control himself more

than he has done in the past. Or, before any such advances influence human life sufficiently, man may destroy the civilization he has built and have to start anew.

There is no visible limit to the advance of science, if it is given the chance to advance. Yet it may be that the scientific method of observation is not always applicable to all the varieties of human experience and cannot cross the uncharted ocean that surrounds us. With the help of philosophy it may go a little further and venture even on these high seas. And when both science and philosophy fail us, we shall have to rely on such other powers of apprehension as we may possess. For there appears to be a definite stopping place beyond which reason, as the mind is at present constituted, cannot go. 'La derniere demarche de la raison,' says Pascal, 'c'est de connaitre qu'il y a une infinite de choses qui la surpassent. Elle est bien faible si elle ne va jusque-la.'*

Realizing these limitations of reason and scientific method, we have still to hold on to them with all our strength, for without that firm basis and background we can have no grip on any kind of truth or reality. It is better to understand a part of truth and apply it to our lives, than to understand nothing at all and flounder helplessly in a vain attempt to pierce the mystery of existence. The applications of science are inevitable and unavoidable for all countries and people today. But something more than its application is necessary. It is the scientific approach, the adventurous and yet critical

* *'The last frontier of reason is to know that there is an infinity of things that are beyond its own perception. Our thinking would be quite weak if it could not perceive such limitations.'*

temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on pre-conceived theory, the hard discipline of the mind—all this is necessary, not merely for the application of science but for life itself and the solution of its many problems. Too many scientists today, who swear by science, forget all about it outside their particular spheres. The scientific approach and temper are, or should be, a way of life, a process of thinking, a method of acting and associating with our fellowmen. That is a large order and undoubtedly very few of us, if any at all, can function in this way with even partial success. But this criticism applies in equal or even greater measure to all the injunctions which philosophy and religion have laid upon us. The scientific temper points out the way along which man should travel. It is the temper of a free man. We live in a scientific age, so we are told, but there is little evidence of this temper in the people anywhere or even in their leaders.

Science deals with the domain of positive knowledge but the temper which it should produce goes beyond that domain. The ultimate purposes of man may be said to be to gain knowledge, to realize truth, to appreciate goodness and beauty. The scientific method of objective inquiry is not applicable to all these, and much that is vital in life seems to lie beyond its scope—the sensitiveness to art and poetry, the emotion that beauty produces, the inner recognition of goodness. The botanist and zoologist may never experience the charm and beauty of nature; the sociologist may be

wholly lacking in love for humanity. But even when we go to the regions beyond the reach of the scientific method and visit the mountain tops where philosophy dwells and high emotions fill us, or gaze at the immensity beyond, that approach and temper are still necessary.

Very different is the method of religion. Concerned as it is principally with the regions beyond the reach of objective inquiry, it relies on emotion and intuition. And then it applies this method to everything in life, even to those things which are capable of intellectual inquiry and observation. Organized religion, allying itself to theology and often more concerned with its vested interests than with things of the spirit, encourages a temper which is the very opposite to that of science. It produces narrowness and intolerance, credulity and superstition, emotionalism and irrationalism. It tends to close and limit the mind of man, and to produce a temper of a dependent, unfree person.

Even if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him, so Voltaire said—'si Dieu n' existait pas, il faudrait l' inventer.' Perhaps that is true, and indeed the mind of man has always been trying to fashion some such mental image or conception which grew with the mind's growth. But there is something also in the reverse proposition: even if God exists, it may be desirable not to look up to Him or to rely upon Him. Too much dependence on supernatural factors may lead, and has often led, to a loss of self-reliance in man and to a blunting of his capacity and creative ability. And yet some faith seems necessary in things of the spirit which are beyond the scope of our physical world,

some reliance on moral, spiritual, and idealistic conceptions, or else we have no anchorage, no objectives or purpose in life. Whether we believe in God or not, it is impossible not to believe in something, whether we call it a creative life-giving force or vital energy inherent in matter which gives it its capacity for self-movement and change and growth, or by some other name, something that is as real, though elusive, as life is real when contrasted with death. Whether we are conscious of it or not, most of us worship at the invisible altar of some unknown god and offer sacrifices to it—some ideal, personal, national or international; some distant objective that draws us on, though reason itself may find little substance in it; some vague conception of a perfect man and a better world. Perfection may be impossible of attainment, but the demon in us, some vital force, urges us on and we tread that path from generation to generation.

As knowledge advances, the domain of religion, in the narrow sense of the word, shrinks. The more we understand life and nature, the less we look for supernatural causes. Whatever we can understand and control ceases to be a mystery. The processes of agriculture, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, our social relations, were all at one time under the dominion of religion and its high priests. Gradually they have passed out of its control and become subjects for scientific study. Yet much of this is still powerfully affected by religious beliefs and the superstitions that accompany them. The final mysteries still remain far beyond the reach of the human mind and are likely to continue to remain so. But so many of life's mysteries are capable of and await

solution, that an obsession with the final mystery seems hardly necessary or justified. Life still offers not only the loveliness of the world but also the exciting adventure of fresh and never ceasing discoveries, of new panoramas opening out and new ways of living, adding to its fullness and ever making it richer and more complete.

It is therefore with the temper and approach of science, allied to philosophy, and with reverence for all that lies beyond, that we must face life. Thus we may develop an integral vision of life which embraces in its wide scope the past and the present, with all their heights and depths, and look with serenity towards the future. The depths are there and cannot be ignored, and always by the side of the loveliness that surrounds us is the misery of the world. Man's journey through life is an odd mixture of joy and sorrow; thus only can he learn and advance. The travail of the soul is a tragic and lonely business. External events and their consequences affect us powerfully, and yet the greatest shocks come to our minds through inner fears and conflicts. While we advance on the external plane, as we must if we are to survive, we have also to win peace with ourselves and between ourselves and our environment, a peace which brings satisfaction not only to our physical and material needs but also to those inner imaginative urges and adventurous spirits that have distinguished man ever since he started on his troubled journey in the realms of thought and action. Whether that journey has any ultimate purpose or not we do not know, but it has its compensations, and it points to many a nearer objective

which appears attainable and which may again become the starting point for a fresh advance.

Science has dominated the Western world and everyone there pays tribute to it, and yet the West is still far from having developed the real temper of science. It has still to bring the spirit and the flesh into creative harmony. In India in many obvious ways we have a greater distance to travel. And yet there may be fewer major obstructions on our way, for the essential basis of Indian thought for ages past, though not its later manifestations, fits in with the scientific temper and approach, as well as with internationalism. It is based on a fearless search for truth, on the solidarity of man, even on the divinity of everything living, and on the free and co-operative development of the individual and the species, ever to greater freedom and higher stages of human growth.

EXERCISES

1. Why does the author feel that India must break with much of the past and not allow it to dominate the present?
2. What are the things the author feels we can never forget but must always retain?
3. What are some of the things that we need to break away from which is referred to as the dead wood of the past?
4. The author suggests that we need to get out of traditional ways of thought and living. What is his purpose in suggesting this?
5. a) What definition of truth, if there is such a thing, does the author give us?
   b) Give the views expressed by the author on truth.

6. What does the author have to say about truth when some aspect of it is petrified by dogma?
7. Though religions have helped in the development of humanity in several ways, they have also retarded progress and change. How has this come about?
8. Though philosophy has encouraged thought and inquiry it has usually lived in its ivory tower. Elucidate.
9. What does the author tell us of the effect of science on man?
10. How does the author justify that something more than the applications of science are necessary for the understanding of truth?
11. In what ways do the scientific and religious methods differ?
12. 'Even if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him'. What reasons does the author give to justify this statement?
13. How does the author deal with the reverse argument 'Even if God exists'?
14. The author says that, 'Whether we believe in God or not, it is impossible not to believe in something'. How does he justify this statement?
15. How does the author suggest that we survive despite the fact that we are naturally affected by external events and their consequences and the shocks which come to us through 'inner fears and conflicts'?
16. Do you feel, after reading this chapter, that we in India may have fewer major obstructions to face on our journey towards developing a true scientific temper?

The Importance of the National Idea. Changes Necessary in India

Nehru, unlike many of his contemporaries, was convinced that national feeling was a crucial and strength-giving force. For Nehru, nationalism was not a static concept that was located either in the hoary past or merely in a breakaway present. It was a dynamic idea that had evolved from our heritage and experience as well as from the changes and priorities of the present. Nehru criticized the Indian people for becoming passive prisoners of past traditions and habits. By the isolation and rigidity various social and religious dogmas resulted in, the Indian people had failed to meet the challenges and adaptations the present required. He recommended a series of broad-based changes at levels of Indian social life so as to re-establish a harmonious balance between the humane and progressive plans of the present and the best of our past culture. From this condition of national concord would follow a spirit of international solidarity.

A blind reverence for the past is bad and so also is a contempt for it, for no future can be founded on either of these. The present and the future inevitably grow out of the past and bear its stamp, and to forget this is to build without foundations and to cut off the roots of national growth. It is to ignore one of the most powerful forces that influence people. Nationalism is essentially a group memory of past achievements, traditions, and experiences, and nationalism is stronger today than it has ever been. Many people thought that nationalism had had its day and must inevitably give place to the ever-growing international tendencies of the modern world. Socialism with its proletarian background derided national culture as something tied up with a

decaying middle class. Capitalism itself became progressively international with its cartels and combines and overflowed national boundaries. Trade and commerce, easy communications and rapid trans-port, the radio and cinema, all helped to create an international atmosphere and to produce the delusion that nationalism was doomed.

Yet whenever a crisis has arisen nationalism has emerged again and dominated the scene, and people have sought comfort and strength in their old traditions. One of the remarkable developments of the present age has been the rediscovery of the past and of the nation. This going back to national traditions has been most marked in the ranks of labour and the proletarian elements, who were supposed to be the foremost champions of international action. War or similar crisis dissolves their internationalism and they become subject to nationalist hates and fears even more than other groups. The most striking example of this is the recent development of the Soviet Union. Without giving up in any way its essential social and economic structure, it has become more nationalist-minded and the appeal of the fatherland is now much greater than the appeal of the international proletariat. Famous figures in national history have again been revived and have become heroes of the Soviet people. The inspiring record of the Soviet people in this war, the strength and unity they have shown, are no doubt due to a social and economic structure which has resulted in social advances on a wide front, on planned production and consumption, on the development of science and its functions, and on the release of a vast quantity of new talent and capacity

for leadership, as also on brilliant leadership. But it may also be partly due to a revival of national memories and traditions and a new awareness of the past, of which the present was felt to be a continuation. It would be wrong to imagine that this nationalist outlook of Russia is just a reversion to old-style nationalism. It is certainly not that. The tremendous experiences of the revolution and all that followed it cannot be forgotten, and the changes that resulted from it in social structure and mental adjustment must remain. That social structure leads inevitably to a certain international outlook. Nevertheless nationalism has reappeared in such a way as to fit in with the new environment and add to the strength of the people.

It is instructive to compare the development of the Soviet state with the varying fortunes of the Communist Parties in other countries. There was the first flush of enthusiasm among many people in all countries, and especially in proletarian ranks, soon after the Soviet Revolution. Out of this grew Communist groups and parties. Then conflicts arose between these groups and national labour parties. During the Soviet five-year plans there was another wave of interest and enthusiasm, and this probably affected middle-class intellectuals even more than Labour. Again there was a reaction at the time of the purges in the Soviet Union. In some countries Communist Parties were suppressed, in others they made progress. But almost everywhere they came into conflict with organized national Labour. Partly this was due to the conservatism of Labour, but more so to a feeling that the Communist Party represented a foreign group and that they took their policies from Russia. The inherent nationalism of Labour came

in the way of its accepting the co-operation of the Communist Party even when many were favourably inclined towards Communism. The many changes in Soviet policy, which could be understood in relation to Russia, became totally incomprehensible as policies favoured by Communist Parties elsewhere. They could only be understood on the basis that what may be good for Russia must necessarily be good for the rest of the world. These Communist Parties, though they consisted of some able and very earnest men and women, lost contact with nationalist sentiments of the people and weakened accordingly. While the Soviet Union was forging new links with national tradition, the Communist Parties of other countries were drifting further away from it.

I cannot speak with much knowledge of what happened elsewhere, but I know that in India the Communist Party is completely divorced from, and is ignorant of, the national traditions that fill the minds of the people. It believes that Communism necessarily implies a contempt for the past. So far as it is concerned, the history of the world began in November 1917, and everything that preceded this was preparatory and leading up to it. Normally speaking, in a country like India with large numbers of people on the verge of starvation and the economic structure cracking up, Communism should have a wide appeal. In a sense there is that vague appeal, but the Communist Party cannot take advantage of it because it has cut itself off from the springs of national sentiment and speaks in a language which finds no echo in the hearts of the people. It remains an energetic, but small group, with no real roots.

It is not only the Communist Party in India that has failed in this respect. There are others who talk glibly of modernism and modern spirit and the essence of Western culture, and are at the same time ignorant of their own culture. Unlike the Communists, they have no ideal that moves them and no driving force that carries them forward. They take the external forms and outer trappings of the West (and often some of the less desirable features), and imagine that they are in the vanguard of an advancing civilization. Naïve and shallow and yet full of their own conceits, they live, chiefly in a few large cities, an artificial life which has no living contacts with the culture of the East or of the West.

National progress can, therefore, neither lie in a repetition of the past nor in its denial. New patterns must inevitably be adopted but they must be integrated with the old. Sometimes the new, though very different, appears in terms of pre-existing patterns, and thus creates a feeling of a continuous development from the past, a link in the long chain of the history of the race. Indian history is a striking record of changes introduced in this way, a continuous adaptation of old ideas to a changing environment, of old patterns to new. Because of this there is no sense of cultural break in it and there is that continuity, in spite of repeated change, from the far distant days of Mohenjo-daro to our own age. There was a reverence for the past and for traditional forms, but there was also a freedom and flexibility of the mind and a tolerance of the spirit. So while forms often remained, the inner content continued to change. In no other way could that society have survived for thousands of years. Only a living and growing mind

could overcome the rigidity of traditional forms, only those forms could give it continuity and stability.

Yet this balance may become precarious and one aspect may overshadow, and to some extent, suppress this other. In India there was an extraordinary freedom of the mind allied to certain rigid social forms. These forms ultimately influenced the freedom of the mind and made it in practice, if not in theory, more rigid and limited. In western Europe there was no such freedom of the mind and there was also much less rigidity in social forms. Europe had a long struggle for the freedom of the mind and, as a consequence, social forms also changed.

In China the flexibility of the mind was even greater than in India and for all her love of, and attachment to, tradition, that mind never lost its flexibility and essential tolerance. Tradition sometimes delayed changes but that mind was not afraid of change, though it retained the old patterns. Even more than in India, Chinese society built up a balance and an equilibrium which survived through many changes for thousands of years. Perhaps one of the great advantages that China has had over other countries is her entire freedom from dogma, from the narrow and limited religious outlook, and her reliance on reason and common sense. No other country has based its culture less on religion and more on morality and ethics and a deep understanding of the variety of human life.

In India, because of the recognized freedom of the mind, howsoever limited in practice, new ideas are not shut out. They are considered and can be accepted far more than in countries which have a more rigid and

dogmatic outlook on life. The essential ideals of Indian culture are broad-based and can be adapted to almost any environment. The bitter conflict between science and religion which shook up Europe in the nineteenth century would have no reality in India, nor would change based on the applications of science bring any conflict with those ideals. Undoubtedly such changes would stir up, as they are stirring up, the mind of India, but instead of combating them or rejecting them it would rationalize them from its own ideological point of view and fit them into its mental framework. It is probable that in this process many vital changes may be introduced in the old outlook, but they will not be superimposed from outside and will seem rather to grow naturally from the cultural background of the people. This is more difficult today than it might have been, because of the long period of arrested growth and the urgent necessity for big and qualitative changes.

Conflict, however, there will be, with much of the superstructure that was grown up round those basic ideals and which exist and stifles us today. That superstructure will inevitably have to go, because much of it is bad in itself and is contrary to the spirit of the age. Those who seek to retain it do an ill service to the basic ideals of Indian culture, for they mix up the good and the bad and thus endanger the former. It is no easy matter to separate the two or draw a hard and fast line between them, and here opinions will differ widely. But it is not necessary to draw any such theoretical and logical line; the logic of changing life and the march of events will gradually draw that line for us. Every kind of development—technological or philosophical—necessitates

contact with life itself, with social needs, with the living movements of the world. Lack of this contact leads to stagnation and loss of vitality and creativeness. But if we maintain these contacts and are receptive to them, we shall adapt ourselves to the curve of life without losing the essential characteristics which we have valued.

Our approach to knowledge in the past was a synthetic one, but limited to India. That limitation continued and the synthetic approach gave place gradually to a more analytical one. We have now to lay greater stress on the synthetic aspect and make the whole world our field of study. This emphasis on synthesis is indeed necessary for every nation and individual if they are to grow out of the narrow grooves of thought and action in which most people have lived for so long. The development of science and its applications have made this possible for us, and yet the very excess of new knowledge has added to its difficulty. Specialization has led to a narrowing of individual life in a particular groove, and man's labour in industry is often confined to some infinitesimal part of the whole product. Specialization in knowledge and work will have to continue, but it seems more essential than ever that a synthetic view of human life and man's adventure through the ages should be encouraged. This view will have to take into consideration the past and the present, and include in its scope all countries and peoples. In this way perhaps we might develop, in addition to our own national backgrounds and cultures, an appreciation of others and a capacity to understand and co-operate with the peoples of other countries. Thus also we might

succeed to some extent in building up integrated personalities instead of the lop-sided individuals of today. We might become, in Plato's words, 'spectators of all time and all being', drawing sustenance from the rich treasures that humanity has accumulated, adding to them, and applying them in building for the future.

It is a curious and significant act that, in spite of all modern scientific progress and talk of internationalism, racialism and other separating factors are at least as much in evidence today, if not more so, than at any previous time in history. There is something lacking in all this progress, which can neither produce harmony between nations nor within the spirit of man. Perhaps more synthesis and a little humility towards the wisdom of the past, which, after all, is the accumulated experience of the human race, would help us to gain a new perspective and greater harmony. That is especially needed by those peoples who live a fevered life in the present only and have almost forgotten the past. But for countries like India a different emphasis is necessary, for we have too much of the past about us and have ignored the present. We have to get rid of that narrowing religious outlook, that obsession with the supernatural and metaphysical speculations, that loosening of the mind's discipline in religious ceremonial and mystical emotionalism, which come in the way of our understanding ourselves and the world. We have to come to grips with the present, this life, this world, this nature which surrounds us in its infinite variety. Some Hindus talk of going back to the Vedas; some Moslems dream of an Islamic theocracy. Idle fancies, for there is no going back to the past; there is no turning back even

if this was thought desirable. There is only one-way traffic in Time.

India must therefore lessen her religiosity and turn to science. She must get rid of the exclusiveness in thought and social habit which has become like a prison to her, stunting her spirit and preventing growth. The idea of ceremonial purity has erected barriers against social intercourse and narrowed the sphere of social action. The day-to-day religion of the orthodox Hindu is more concerned with what to eat and what not to eat, who to eat with and from whom to keep away, than with spiritual values. The rules and regulations of the kitchen dominate his social life. The Moslem is fortunately free from these inhibitions, but he has his own narrow codes and ceremonials, a routine which he rigorously follows, forgetting the lesson of brotherhood which his religion taught him. His view of life is, perhaps, even more limited and sterile than the Hindu view, though the average Hindu today is a poor representative of the latter view, for he has lost that traditional freedom of thought and the background that enriches life in many ways.

Caste is the symbol and embodiment of this exclusiveness among the Hindus. It is sometimes said that the basic idea of caste might remain, but its subsequent harmful development and ramifications should go; that it should not depend on birth but on merit. This approach is irrelevant and merely confuses the issue. In a historical context a study of the growth of caste has some value, but we cannot obviously go back to the period when caste began; in the social organization of today it has no place left. If merit is the only criterion

and opportunity is thrown open to everybody, then caste loses all its present-day distinguishing features and, in fact, ends. Caste has in the past not only led to the suppression of certain groups, but to a separation of theoretical and scholastic learning from craftsmanship, and a divorce of philosophy from actual life and its problems. It was an aristocratic approach based on traditionalism. This outlook has to change completely, for it is wholly opposed to modern conditions and the democratic ideal. The functional organization of social groups in India may continue, but even that will undergo a vast change as the nature of modern industry creates new functions and puts an end to many old ones. The tendency today everywhere is towards a functional organization of society, and the concept of abstract right is giving place to that of functions. This is in harmony with the old Indian ideal.

The spirit of the age is in favour of equality, though practice denies it almost everywhere. We have got rid of slavery in the narrow sense of the word, that a man can be the property of another. But a new slavery, in some ways worse than the old, has taken its place all over the world. In the name of individual freedom, political and economic systems exploit human beings and treat them as commodities. And again, though an individual cannot be the property of another, a country and a nation can still be the property of another nation, and thus group slavery is tolerated. Racialism also is a distinguishing feature of our times, and we have not only master nations but also master races.

Yet the spirit of the age will triumph. In India, at any rate, we must aim at equality. That does not and cannot

mean that everybody is physically or intellectually or spiritually equal or can be made so. But it does mean equal opportunities for all and no political, economic, or social barrier in the way of any individual or group. It means a faith in humanity and a belief that there is no race or group that cannot advance and make good in its own way, given the chance to do so. It means a realization of the fact that the backwardness or degradation of any group is not due to inherent failings in it, but principally to lack of opportunities and long suppression by other groups. It should mean an understanding of the modern world wherein real progress and advance, whether national or international, have become very much a joint affair and a backward group pulls back others. Therefore, not only must equal opportunities be given to all, but special opportunities for educational, economic and cultural growth must be given to backward groups so as to enable them to catch up to those who are ahead of them. Any such attempt to open the doors of opportunity to all in India will release enormous energy and ability and transform the country with amazing speed.

If the spirit of the age demands equality, it must necessarily also demand an economic system which fits in with it and encourages it. The present colonial system in India is the very antithesis of it. Absolutism is not only based on inequality but must perpetuate it in every sphere of life. It suppresses the creative and regenerative forces of a nation, bottles up talent and capacity, and discourages the spirit of responsibility. Those who have to suffer under it, lose their sense of dignity and self-reliance. The problems of India, complicated as they

seem, are essentially due to an attempt to advance while preserving the political and economic structure more or less intact. Political advance is made subject to the preservation of this structure and existing vested interests. The two are incompatible.

Political change there must be, but economic change is equally necessary. That change will have to be in the direction of a democratically planned collectivism. 'The choice,' says R. H. Tawney, 'is not between competition and monopoly, but between monopoly which is irresponsible and private and a monopoly which is responsible and public.' Public monopolies are growing even in capitalist states and they will continue to grow. The conflict between the idea underlying them and private monopoly will continue till the latter is liquidated. A democratic collectivism need not mean an abolition of private property, but it will mean the public ownership of the basic and major industries. It will mean the co-operative or collective control of the land. In India especially it will be necessary to have, in addition to the big industries, co-operatively controlled small and village industries. Such a system of democratic collectivism will need careful and continuous planning and adaptation to the changing needs of the people. The aim should be the expansion of the productive capacity of the nation in every possible way, at the same time absorbing all the labour power of the nation in some activity or other and preventing unemployment. As far as possible there should be freedom to choose one's occupation. An equalization of income will not result from all this, but there will be far more equitable sharing and a progressive tendency towards

equalization. In any event, the vast differences that exist today will disappear completely, and class distinctions, which are essentially based on differences in income, will begin to fade out.

Such a change would mean an upsetting of the present-day acquisitive society based primarily on the profit motive. The profit motive may still continue to some extent but it will not be the dominating urge, nor will it have the same scope as it has today. It would be absurd to say that the profit motive does not appeal to the average Indian, but it is nevertheless true that there is no such admiration for it in India as there is in the West. The possessor of money may be envied but he is not particularly respected or admired. Respect and admiration still go to the man or woman who is considered good and wise, and especially to those who sacrifice themselves or what they possess for the public good. The Indian outlook, even of the masses, has never approved of the spirit of acquisitiveness.

Collectivism involves communal undertakings and co-operative effort. This again is fully in harmony with old Indian social conceptions which were all based on the idea of the group. The decay of the group system under British rule, and especially of the self-governing village, has caused deep injury to the Indian masses, even more psychological than economic. Nothing positive came in its place, and they lost their spirit of independence, their sense of responsibility, and their capacity to co-operate together for common purposes. The village, which used to be an organic and vital unit, became progressively a derelict area, just a collection of mud huts and odd individuals. But still the village holds

together by some invisible link and old memories revive. It should be easily possible to take advantage of these age-long traditions and to build up communal and co-operative concerns in the land and in small industry. The village can no longer be a self-contained economic unit (though it may often be intimately connected with a collective or co-operative farm), but it can very well be a governmental and electoral unit, each such unit functioning as a self-governing community within the larger political framework, and looking after the essential needs of the village. If it is treated to some extent as an electoral unit, this will simplify provincial and all-India elections considerably by reducing the number of direct electors. The village council, itself chosen by all the adult men and women of the village, could form these electors for the bigger elections. Indirect elections may have some disadvantages but, having regard to the background in India, I feel sure that the village should be treated as a unit. This will give a truer and more responsible representation.

In addition to this territorial representation, there should also be direct representation of the collectives and co-operatives on the land and in industry. Thus the democratic organization of the state will consist of both functional and territorial representatives, and will be based on local autonomy. Some such arrangement will be completely in harmony with India's past as well as with her present requirements. There will be no sense of break (except with the conditions created by British rule) and the mass mind will accept it as a continuation of the past which it still remembers and cherishes.

Such a development in India would be in tune with political and economic internationalism, it would breed no conflicts with other nations and would be a powerful factor for peace in Asia and the world. It would help in the realization of that one world towards which we are inevitably being driven, even though our passions delude us and our minds fail to understand it. The Indian people, freed from the terrible sense of oppression and frustration, will grow in stature again and lose their narrow nationalism and exclusiveness. Proud of their Indian heritage, they will open their minds and hearts to other peoples and other nations, and become citizens of this wide and fascinating world, marching onwards with others in that ancient quest in which their forefathers were the pioneers.

EXERCISES

1. What, according to the author, is nationalism, and why does he say that if we were to forget the past we would be building without foundations?
2. How does the author justify that nationalism has not been replaced by international tendencies like socialism and capitalism in India?
3. a) Why do you think nationalism emerges everytime there is a crisis in the country?
   b) Can you cite three instances when India has faced such a crisis after having attained Independence?
4. Why does the author say that it would be wrong to imagine that the nationalistic outlook of Russia was a revival of national memories and traditions?

5. How did the Soviet Revolution affect people of many countries, particularly those in proletarian ranks?
6. What views does the author express about Communism in India?
7. What does the author have to say of people other than those of the Communist Party in India who talk about the modern spirit and the essence of Western culture?
8. The author states that 'National progress can . . . neither lie in a repetition of the past nor in its denial'. What does he feel is the means to national progress?
9. What reason does the author give for there having been no cultural break but rather a continuity in our cultural heritage despite changes in the long history of India from Mohenjo-daro to the present?
10. What reasons does the author give for there having been a change in social forms in Europe whereas this did not happen in India?
11. What, according to the author, is the great advantage China had over other countries as far as change in culture and social forms was concerned?
12. Why does the author feel that the superstructure that has grown round basic ideals in India will inevitably have to go before we can make qualitative changes to our lifestyles?
13. What reasons does the author give for suggesting that we need to place greater stress on the synthetic aspect of our approach to knowledge, making the whole world our field of study?
14. The author feels that social habits and exclusiveness of thought appear to be like a prison for the Hindus. How does he describe the impact these have had on the orthodox Hindu community in India?
15. The Moslems in India, though not burdened with the social habits and other limitations of the Hindus, have their own narrow codes and ceremonials. How have these affected them in coming to terms with the present?
16. Why do you think the author suggests that the idea that caste should not depend on birth but on merit, would be irrelevant and confuse the issue?

17. The author says that though 'we have got rid of slavery in the narrow sense of the word . . . a new slavery, in some ways worse than the old, has taken its place. What 'new slavery' is the author talking about? And what does he have to say about it?
18. How does the author define 'equality' as should be aimed at and made possible for the people of India?
19. Give the author's views on how the colonial economic system practised by the British encouraged inequality?
20. How does the author define 'democratic collectivism'?
21. What, according to the author, should be the aim of a democratic collective?
22. 'It would be absurd to say that the profit motive does not appeal to the average Indian, but it is nevertheless true that there is no such admiration for it in India as there is in the West.'
    a) In what context does the author make this statement and who does he say is the person really respected and admired in India?
    b) State whether you agree or disagree with the statement in today's context, giving reasons to support your point of view.
23. How did the decay of the group system under the British, affect the Indian masses?
24. The author suggests that the village can be a governmental and electoral unit. Give the main suggestions put forward by the author as to how a village unit could function as a self-governing community within the larger political framework.

The Problem of Population. Falling Birth-rates and National Decay

In this section, Nehru has discussed the problems and instabilities that are faced by new, technologically advanced societies. The decline in population in Europe, he wrote, could not be attributed only to the death and displacement that the two World Wars had caused in these countries. The deeper cause, he suggested, that was behind such depression was rooted in the changes in human lifestyle and thinking that had gradually occured in these technologically advanced societies. As technology and industry progressed and spread, some of the social ills that they produced would also be wider diffused. Therefore, it was important that modern societies recognized the side-effects of thoughtless development and sought to achieve a better integration of individuals with their natural environment.

Five years of war have brought about enormous changes and displacements of population on a vaster scale probably than at any previous epoch of history. Apart from the scores of millions of war casualties, more especially in China, Russia, Poland, and Germany, masses of people have been uprooted from their homes and countries. There have been military requirements, labour demands and enforced evacuations, and swarms of refugees have fled before invading armies. Even before the war the refugee problem in Europe, due to Nazi policy, had grown to formidable proportions. But these pale into insignificance when compared to war developments. Apart from the direct consequences of the war, the changes in Europe are largely due to a

deliberate demographic policy pursued by the Nazis. They have apparently killed off millions of Jews and broken up the population integrity of many countries occupied by them. In the Soviet Union many millions have moved east, forming new settlements on the other side of the Urals, which are likely to be permanent. In China it is estimated that fifty million people have been torn from their roots.

Attempts will, no doubt, be made to repatriate and rehabilitate these people, or such as survive after the war, though the task is one of prodigious complexity. Many will come back to their old homes, many may choose to remain in their new environment. On the other hand, it seems also likely that, as a result of political changes in Europe, there will be further displacement and exchange of populations.

Of far deeper and more far-reaching significance are the changes, partly physiological and biological, that are rapidly changing the population of the world. The Industrial Revolution and the spread of modern technology resulted in a rapid growth of population in Europe, and more especially in north-western and central Europe. As this technology has spread eastwards to the Soviet Union, aided by a new economic structure and other factors, there has been an even more spectacular increase in population in these regions. This eastward sweep of technology, accompanied by education, sanitation, and better public health, is continuing and will cover many of the countries of Asia. Some of these countries, like India, far from needing a bigger population, would be better off with fewer people.

Meanwhile, in western Europe a reverse process has set in as regards population and the problem of a falling birth-rate is growing in importance.

This tendency appears to be widespread and affects most countries in the world, with some notable exceptions like China, India, Java, and the U.S.S.R. It is most marked in the industrially advanced countries. The population of France ceased to grow many years ago and is now slowly declining. In England a steady fall in the fertility rate has been noticeable since the eighties of the last century, and it is the lowest now in Europe, except for France. Hitler's and Mussolini's efforts to increase the birth-rate in Germany and Italy bore only temporary results. In northern, western, and central Europe the decline is more marked than in southern and eastern Europe (exclusive of the U.S.S.R.), but similar tendencies are observable in all these regions. Europe, apart from Russia, reaches its maximum population, according to present trends, about 1955 and then begins to decline. This has nothing to do with war losses which will aggravate this downward tendency.

The Soviet Union, on the other hand, goes on rapidly increasing its population and is likely to reach a figure exceeding 250 million by 1970. This does not include any additions due to territorial changes as a result of the war. This growth of population taken together with technological and other kinds of progress inevitably makes it the dominant power in Europe and Asia. In Asia much depends on the industrial development of China and India. Their huge populations are a burden and a weakness unless they are properly and productively organized. In Europe the great colonial powers of

the past appear to have definitely passed the stage of expansion and aggression. Their economic and political organization and the skill and ability of their people may still give them an important place in world affairs, but they will progressively cease to count as major powers unless they function as a group. 'It does not seem likely that any nation of north-western and central Europe will challenge the world again. Germany, like her western neighbours, has passed the period in which she could become a dominant world-power, owing to the diffusion of technological civilization to peoples that are growing more rapidly.'*.

Technological and industrial growth have brought power to a number of western peoples and countries. It is exceedingly unlikely that this source of power will remain the monopoly of a few nations. Hence the political and economic dominance of Europe over great parts of the world must inevitably decline rapidly and it will cease to be the nerve-centre of the Eurasian continent and Africa. Because of this basic reason the old European powers will think and act more in terms of peace and international co-operation and will avoid war in so far as they can. When aggression is almost certain to lead to disaster, it ceases to attract. But those world powers that are still dominant, have not the same urge to co-operation with others, unless it is the moral urge, which is very seldom associated with power.

* *Frank W. Notestein in an article on 'Population and Power in Post-War Europe'* Foreign Affairs *(U.S.A.) for April, 1944. (The I.L.O. has issued a study on 'The Displacement of Population in Europe' by E.M. Kulischer, 1943)*

What is the cause of this widespread phenomenon of falling birth-rates? The increasing use of contraceptives and the desire to have small regulated families may have produced some effect, but it is generally recognized that this has not made any great difference. In Ireland, which is a Catholic country and where contraceptives are presumably little used, a fall in the birth-rate started earlier than in other countries. Probably the increasing postponement of marriages in the West is one of the causes. Economic factors may have some influence but even that is hardly an important consideration. It is well known that as a rule fertility is higher among the poor than among the rich, as it is also higher in rural areas than in urban. A smaller group can maintain higher standards, and the growth of individualism lessens the importance of the group and the race. Professor J.B.S. Haldane tells us that it is a general rule that in a great many civilized societies those types which are regarded in the particular society in question as admirable are less fertile than the general run of the population. Thus those societies would appear to be biologically unstable. Large families are often associated with inferior intelligence. Economic success is also supposed to be the opposite of biological success.

Little seems to be known about the basic causes behind the falling birth-rate, though many subsidiary ones are suggested. It is possible, however, that certain physiological and biological reasons lie at the back of it—the kind of life industrialized communities lead and the environment in which they live. A deficient diet, alcoholism, neurotic conditions or poor health generally, mental or physical, affect reproduction. And yet

disease-ridden and insufficiently fed communities, as in India, still reproduce themselves at a prodigious rate. Perhaps the strain and stress of modern life, the ceaseless competition and worry, lessen fertility. Probably the divorce from the life-giving soil is an important factor. Even in America the fertility of farm labourers is considerably more than double that of the professional classes.

It would seem that the kind of modern civilization that developed first in the West and spread elsewhere, and especially the metropolitan life that has been its chief feature, produces an unstable society which gradually loses its vitality. Life advances in many fields and yet it loses its grip; it becomes more artificial and slowly ebbs away. More and more stimulants are needed—drugs to enable us to sleep or to perform our other natural functions, food and drinks that tickle the palate and produce a momentary exhilaration at the cost of weakening the system, and special devices to give us a temporary sensation of pleasure and excitement—and after the stimulation comes the reaction and a sense of emptiness. With all its splendid manifestations and real achievements, we have created a civilization which has something counterfeit about it. We eat ersatz foods produced with the help of ersatz fertilizers; we indulge in ersatz emotions and our human relations seldom go below the superficial plane. The advertiser is one of the symbols of our age with his continuous and raucous attempts to delude us and dull our powers of perception and induce us to buy unnecessary and even harmful products. I am not blaming others for this state of affairs. We are all products of this age with the characteristics

of our generation, equally entitled to credit or blame. Certainly I am as much a part of this civilization, that I both appreciate and criticize, as any one else and my habits and ways of thought are conditioned by it.

What is wrong with modern civilization which produces at the roots these signs of sterility and racial decadence? But this is nothing new, it has happened before and history is full of examples of it. Imperial Rome in its decline was far worse. Is there a cycle governing this inner decay and can we seek out the causes and eliminate them? Modern industrialism and the capitalist structure of society cannot be the sole causes, for decadence has often occurred without them. It is probable, however, that in their present forms they do create an environment, a physical and mental climate, which is favourable for the functioning of those causes. If the basic cause is something spiritual, something affecting the mind and spirit of man, it is difficult to grasp though we may try to understand it or intuitively feel it. But one fact seems to stand out: that a divorce from the soil, from the good earth, is bad for the individual and the race.

The earth and the sun are the sources of life and if we keep away from them for long life begins to ebb away. Modern industrialized communities have lost touch with the soil and do not experience that joy which nature gives and the rich glow of health which comes from contact with mother earth. They talk of nature's beauty and go to seek it in occasional weekends, littering the countryside with the product of their own artificial lives, but they cannot commune with nature or feel part of it. It is something to look at and admire, because

they are told to do so, and then return with a sigh of relief to their normal haunts; just as they might try to admire some classic poet or writer and then, wearied by the attempt, return to their favourite novel or detective story, where no effort of mind is necessary. They are not children of nature, like the old Greeks or Indians, but strangers paying an embarrassing call on a scarce-known distant relative. And so they do not experience that joy in nature's rich life and infinite variety and that feeling of being intensely alive which came so naturally to our forefathers. Is it surprising then that nature treats them as unwanted step-children?

We cannot go back to that old pantheistic outlook and yet perhaps we may still sense the mystery of nature, listen to its songs of life and beauty, and draw vitality from it. That song is not sung in the chosen spots only, and we can hear it, if we have the ears for it, almost everywhere. But there are some places where it charms even those who are unprepared for it and comes like the deep notes of a distant and powerful organ. Among these favoured spots is Kashmir where loveliness dwells and an enchantment steals over the senses. Writing about Kashmir, M. Foucher, the French savant, says: 'May I go further and say what I believe to be the true reason for this special charm of Kashmir, the charm which everybody seeks, even those who do not try to analyse it? It cannot be only because of its magnificent woods, the pure limpidity of its lakes, the splendour of its snowy mountain tops, or the happy murmur of its myriad brooks sounding in the cool soft air. Nor can it be only the grace or majesty of its ancient buildings, though the ruins of Martand rise at the prow of their

Karewa as proudly as a Greek temple on a promontory, and the little shrine of Payar, carved out of ten stones, has the perfect proportions of the choragic monuments of Lysicrates. One cannot even say that it comes of the combination of art and landscape, for fine buildings in a romantic setting are to be found in many other countries. But what is found in Kashmir alone is the grouping of these two kinds of beauty in the midst of a nature still animated with a mysterious life, which knows how to whisper close to our ears and make the pagan depths of us quiver, which leads us back, consciously or unconsciously, to those past days lamented by the poet, when the world was young, when

'le ciel sur la terre
*Marchait et respirait dans un peuple de dieux.'**

But my purpose is not to praise Kashmir, though my partiality for it occasionally leads me astray, nor to advance an argument in favour of pantheism, though I am pagan enough to believe that a touch of paganism is good for the mind and body. I do think that life cut off completely from the soil will ultimately wither away. Of course there is seldom such a complete cutting off and the processes of nature take their time. But it is a weakness of modern civilization that it is progressively going further away from the life-giving elements. The

* *'The sky met the earth*
And walked and breathed in the air of a people of god.'
'L'art greco-bouddhiqe du Gandhara (Gandhara's Graeco-Buddhist Art).'

competitive and acquisitive characteristics of modern capitalist society, the enthronement of wealth above everything else, the continuous strain and the lack of security for many, add to the ill-health of the mind and produce neurotic states. A saner and more balanced economic structure would lead to an improvement of these conditions. Even so it will be necessary to have greater and more living contacts with the land and nature. This does not mean a return to the land in the old and limited sense of the word, or to a going back to primitive ways of life. That remedy might well be worse than the disease. It should be possible to organize modern industry in such a way as to keep men and women, as far as possible, in touch with the land, and to raise the cultural level of the rural areas. The village and the city should approach each other in regard to life's amenities, so that in both there should be full opportunities for bodily and mental development and full all-rounded life.

That this can be done I have little doubt, provided only that people want to do it. At present there is no such widespread desire and our energies are diverted (apart from killing each other) in producing ersatz products and ersatz amusements. I have no basic objection to most of these, and some I think are definitely desirable, but they absorb the time that might often be better employed and give a wrong perspective to life. Artificial fertilizers are in great demand today and I suppose they do good in their own way. But it does seem odd to me that in their enthusiasm for the artificial product, people should forget natural manure and even waste it and throw it away. Only China, as a nation, has

had the good sense to make full use of the natural stuff. Some experts say that artificial fertilizers, through producing quick results, weaken the soil by depriving it of some essential ingredients, and thus land grows progressively more sterile. With the earth, as with our individual lives, there is far too much of burning the candle at both ends. We take her riches from her at a prodigious pace and give little or nothing back.

We are proud of our increasing ability to produce almost anything in the chemical laboratory. From the age of steam, we proceeded to that of electricity and now we are in an age of biotechnics and electronics. The age of social science, which we hope will solve many of the intimate problems that trouble us so much, looms ahead. We are also told that we are on the threshold of the magnesium-aluminium age and as both these metals are extremely abundant and universally distributed, there can be no lack for any one. The new chemistry is building a new life for mankind. We seem to be on the verge of increasing enormously the power resources of humanity and all manner of epoch-making discoveries hover over the near future.

All this is very comforting and yet a doubt creeps into my mind. It is not lack of power that we suffer from but a misuse of the power we possess or not a proper application of it. Science gives power but remains impersonal, purposeless, and almost unconcerned with our application of the knowledge it puts at our disposal. It may continue its triumphs and yet, if it ignores nature too much, nature may play a subtle revenge upon it. While life seems to grow in outward stature, it may ebb away inside for lack of something yet undiscovered by science.

EXERCISES

1. Describe the effect of and the changes brought about by five years of war on the population of different countries of the world, giving reasons for the same.
2. What were the effects of the Industrial Revolution and the spread of modern technology?
3. What information does the author give us on birth-rate tendencies in:-
   a) France
   b) England
   c) China, India, Java and the U.S.S.R.
   d) Germany and Italy
   e) Europe
4. Why do you think the huge population of China and India are a burden to these countries, whereas the huge population of the Soviet Union makes it a dominant power in Europe?
5. What makes the author feel that the colonial powers in Europe will progressively cease to count as major powers unless they function as a group?
6. The author suggests that the political and economic dominance of Europe over great parts of the world must inevitably decline rapidly.
   What reasons does he give for this view?
7. What factors, according to the author, have contributed to the widespread phenomenon of falling birth-rates?
8. 'Life advances in many fields' in modern civilization and 'yet loses its grip'.
   Give your views on this statement clearly stating whether you agree or disagree, with reasons for the same.
9. 'The earth and the sun are sources of life and if we keep away from them for long, life begins to ebb away.'
   According to the author modern industrialized communities have lost touch with the soil. How do they try to make up for this loss?
10. What do we learn of the author's great passion for nature and his love for Kashmir from this chapter?

11. The author clearly states he is not advocating a return to the land in the old and limited sense of the word. What method does he suggest in order to keep men and women, as far as possible, in touch with nature?
12. What are the author's views on artificial fertilizers?
13. The author states, 'We seem to be on the verge of increasing enormously the power resources of humanity and all manner of epoch-making discoveries.'
    Though this is an encouraging development, the author has some reservations about it. Summarize in brief the doubts which creep into his mind in connection with the above.

The Modern Approach to an Old Problem

The greatest minds of human civilization, wrote Nehru, have in all ages pronounced that an understanding of both the physical or external environment, as well as the development of the mind or the spiritual being are the two inseparable elements that make society and the individual complete. In our modern age, we are far nearer achieving the former than ever before. The achievements of modern science have given us control over our surroundings and an understanding of it. It is tempting to delude ourselves into believing that these developments alone signify real progress. However, modern scientific advances and its results can overwhelm both societies and individuals unless it has been anchored and sustained by equal development of humane ideals and values. Achieving this harmony has been an age old dilemma, and modern society today must recognize the importance of this harmony and seek to find its own solutions towards achieving it.

The modern mind, that is to say the better type of the modern mind, is practical and pragmatic, ethical and social, altruistic and humanitarian. It is governed by a practical idealism for social betterment. The ideals which move it represent the spirit of the age, the Zeitgeist, the Yugadharma. It has discarded to a large extent the philosophic approach of the ancients, their search for ultimate reality, as well as the devotionalism and mysticism of the medieval period. Humanity is its god and social service its religion. This conception may be incomplete, as the mind of every age has been limited by its environment, and every age has considered some partial truth as the key to all truth. Every generation and every people suffer from the illusion that their way of

looking at things is the only right way, or is, at any rate, the nearest approach to it. Every culture has certain values attached to it, limited and conditioned by that culture. The people governed by that culture take these values for granted and attribute a permanent validity to them. So the values of our present-day culture may not be permanent and final; nevertheless they have an essential importance for us for they represent the thought and spirit of the age we live in. A few seers and geniuses, looking into the future, may have a completer vision of humanity and the universe; they are of the vital stuff out of which all real advance comes. The vast majority of people do not even catch up to the present-day values, though they may talk about them in the jargon of the day, and they live imprisoned in the past.

We have therefore to function in line with the highest ideals of the age we live in, though we may add to them or seek to mould them in accordance with our national genius. Those ideals may be classed under two heads: humanism and the scientific spirit. Between these two there has been an apparent conflict but the great upheaval of thought today, with its questioning of all values, is removing the old boundaries between these two approaches, as well as between the external world of science and the internal world of introspection. There is growing synthesis between humanism and the scientific spirit, resulting in a kind of scientific humanism. Science also, while holding on to fact, is on the verge of other domains, or at any rate, has ceased to deny them contemptuously. Our five senses and what they can perceive, obviously, do not exhaust the universe. During the past twenty-five years there has

been a profound change in the scientist's picture of the physical world. Science used to look at nature as something almost apart from man. But now, Sir James Jeans tells us that the essence of science is that 'man no longer sees nature as something distinct from himself.' And then the old question arises which troubled the thinkers of the Upanishads: how can the knower be known? How can the eyes that can see external objects see themselves? And if the external is part and parcel of the internal, what we perceive or conceive is but a projection of our minds, and the universe and nature and the soul and mind and body, the transcendent and the immanent are all essentially one, how then are we, within the limited framework of our minds to understand this mighty scheme of things objectively? Science has begun to touch these problems and though they may elude it, still the earnest scientist of today is the prototype of the philosopher and the man of religion of earlier ages. 'In this materialistic age of ours,' says Professor Albert Einstein, 'the serious scientific workers are the only profoundly religious people.'*

In all this there appears to be a firm belief in science and yet an apprehension that purely factual and purposeless science is not enough. Was science, in providing so much of life's furniture, ignoring life's significance? There is an attempt to find a harmony between the world of fact and the world of spirit, for it was becoming increasingly obvious that the over- em-

* *Fifty years ago, Vivekananda regarded modern science as a manifestation of the real religious spirit, for it sought to understand truth by sincere effort.*

phasis on the former was crushing the spirit of man. The question that troubled the philosophers of old has come up again in a different form and context: How to reconcile the phenomenal life of the world with the inner spiritual life of the individual. The physicians have discovered that it is not enough to treat the body of the individual or of society as whole. In recent years, medical men, familiar with the findings of modern psychopathology, have abandoned the antithesis between 'organic' and 'functional' diseases, and lay greater stress on the psychological factor. 'This is the greatest error in the treatment of sickness,' wrote Plato, 'that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, and yet the two are one and indivisible.'

Einstein, most eminent among scientists, tells us that 'the fate of the human race was more than ever dependent on its moral strength today. The way to a joyful and happy state is through renunciation and self-limitation everywhere.' He takes us back suddenly from this proud age of science to the old philosophers, from the lust for power and the profit motive to the spirit of renunciation with which India has been so familiar. Probably most other scientists of today will not agree with him in this or when he says: 'I am absolutely convinced that no wealth in the world can help humanity forward, even in the hands of the most devoted worker in the cause. The example of great and pure characters is the only thing that can produce fine ideas of noble deeds. Money only appeals to selfishness and always tempts its owners irresistibly to abuse it.'

In facing this question, that is as old as civilization itself, modern science has many advantages denied to the old philosophers. It possesses stores of accumulated

knowledge and a method which has abundantly justified itself. It has mapped and chartered many regions which were unknown to the ancients. As it has enlarged man's understanding and control over many things, they have ceased to be mysteries to be exploited by the priests of religion. But it has some disadvantages also. The very abundance of its accumulated knowledge has made it difficult for man to take a synthetic view of the whole, and he loses himself in some part of it, analyses, it, studies it, partly understands it, and fails to see its connection with the whole. The vast forces science has released overwhelm him and carry him forward relentlessly, and often an unwilling victim, to unknown shores. The pace of modern life, the succession of crisis after crisis, comes in the way of a dispassionate search for truth. Wisdom itself is hustled and pushed about and cannot easily discover that calm and detached outlook which is so necessary for true understanding. 'For still are the ways of wisdom and her temper trembleth not.'

Perhaps we are living in one of the great ages of mankind and have to pay the price for that privilege. The great ages have been full of conflict and instability, of an attempt to change over from the old to something new. There is no permanent stability or security or changelessness; if there were, life itself would cease. At the most we can seek a relative stability and a moving equilibrium. Life is a continuous struggle of man against man, of man against his surroundings, a struggle on the physical, intellectual, and moral plane out of which new things take shape and fresh ideas are born. Destruction and construction go side by side and both

aspects of man and nature are ever evident. Life is a principle of growth, not of standing still, a continuous becoming, which does not permit static conditions.

Today, in the world of politics and economics there is a search for power and yet when power is attained much else of value has gone. Political trickery and intrigue take the place of idealism, and cowardice and selfishness the place of disinterested courage. Form prevails over substance, and power, so eagerly sought after, somehow fails to achieve what it aimed at. For power has its limitations, and force recoils on itself. Neither can control the spirit, though they may harden and coarsen it. 'You can rob an army of its general,' says Confucius, 'but not the least of men of his will.'

John Stuart Mill wrote in his autobiography: 'I am now convinced that no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible, until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought.' And yet that fundamental change in the modes of thought itself comes from a changing environment and the pain and suffering that accompany life's unceasing struggle. And so, though we may try to change those modes of thought directly, it is even more necessary to change the environment in which they grew and found sustenance. Each depends on and influences the other. There is an endless variety of men's minds. Each one sees the truth in his own way and is often unable to appreciate another's viewpoint. Out of this comes conflict. Out of this interaction also a fuller and more integrated truth emerges. For we have to realize that truth is many-sided and is not the monopoly of any group or nation. So also the way of doing things.

There may be different ways for different people in different situations. India and China, as well as other nations, evolved their own ways of life and gave them an enduring foundation. They imagined, and many among them vainly imagine still, that their way is the only way. Today, Europe and America have evolved their own way of life, which is dominant in the world, and which, their people imagine, is the only way. But probably none of these ways is the one and only desirable way and each may learn something from the other. Certainly India and China must learn a great deal, for they had become static and the West not only represents the spirit of the age but is dynamic and changing and has the capacity for growth in it, even though this functions through self-destruction and periodical human sacrifice.

In India, and perhaps in other countries also, there are alternating tendencies for self-glorification and self-pity. Both are undesirable and ignoble. It is not through sentimentality and emotional approaches that we can understand life, but by a frank and courageous facing of realities. We cannot lose ourselves in aimless and romantic quests unconnected with life's problems, for destiny marches on and does not wait for our leisure. Nor can we concern ourselves with externals only, forgetting the significance of the inner life of man. There has to be a balance, an attempt at harmony between them. 'The greatest good,' wrote Spinoza in the seventeenth century, 'is the knowledge of the union which the mind has with the whole of nature . . . The more the mind knows the better it understands its forces and the order of nature; the more it understands its forces or

strength, the better it will be able to direct itself and lay down rules for itself; and the more it understands the order of nature the more easily it will be able to liberate itself from useless things; this is the whole method.'

In our individual lives also we have to discover a balance between the body and the spirit, and between man as part of nature and man as part of society. 'For our perfection,' says Tagore, 'we have to be vitally savage and mentally civilized; we should have the gift to be natural with nature and human with human society.' Perfection is beyond us for it means the end, and we are always journeying, trying to approach something that is ever receding. And in each one of us are many different human beings with their inconsistencies and contradictions, each pulling in a different direction. There is the love of life and the disgust with life, the acceptance of all that life involves and the rejection of much of it. It is difficult to harmonize these contrary tendencies, and sometimes one of them is dominant and sometimes another.

'Oftentimes,' says Lao Tzu:

Oftentimes, one strips oneself of passion
In order to see the Secrets of Life;
Oftentimes, one regards life with passion,
In order to see its manifold results.

For all our powers of reason and understanding and all our accumulated knowledge and experience, we know little enough about life's secrets, and can only guess at its mysterious processes. But we can always admire its beauty and, through art, exercise the god-like

function of creation. Though we may be weak and erring mortals, living a brief and uncertain span of life, yet there is something of the stuff of the immortal gods in us. 'We must not, therefore,' says Aristotle, 'obey those who urge us, because we are human and mortal, to think human and mortal thoughts; in so far as we may we should practise immortality, and omit no effort to live in accordance with the best that is in us.'

EXERCISES

1. a) How does the author describe 'the modern mind'?
   b) Does he ascribe only positive values to it?
   c) What do the ideals that move the modern mind represent?
2. What do the values of our present-day culture represent?
3. The highest ideals of the age are classified by the author under two heads. What are these?
4. What has made it possible to remove the old boundaries between these two approaches and between the external world of science and the internal world of introspection?
5. How according to the author is 'the scientist's picture of the physical world' changing?
6. Why is it important to realize that truth is many-sided?
7. Why according to the author are balance and harmony necessary?

Epilogue

As Nehru's search for the historical identity of India drew to a close, he attempted to summarize the findings of his long study. He had discovered that India, despite her overwhelming diversity, her contradictions and her multitudinous past, was nevertheless held together by invisible forces. An indomitable character, veiled in legend and myth, and exuding the consciousness of her great ones, prevailed. Yet, looking ahead to the rapidly evolving world, Nehru realized that India could not rely exclusively on her ancient traditions to fashion a national identity for herself, nor could she blindly emulate the nations of the West. While welcoming foreign cultures as she had in the past, India must encounter them on the level field of true internationalism. Only with equality and freedom would she be able to retain her Indian and Asiatic self, and at the same time play a significant role on the increasingly international stage of human endeavour.

Nearly five months have gone by since I took to this writing and I have covered a thousand hand-written pages with this jumble of ideas in my mind. For five months I have travelled in the past and peeped into the future and sometimes tried to balance myself on that 'point of intersection of the timeless with time.' These months have been full of happenings in the world and the war has advanced rapidly towards a triumphant conclusion, so far as military victories go. In my own country also much has happened of which I could be only a distant spectator, and waves of unhappiness have sometimes temporarily swept over me and passed on. Because of this business of thinking and trying to give some expression to my thoughts, I have drawn myself away from the piercing edge of the present and

moved along the wider expanses of the past and the future.

But there must be an end to this wandering. If there was no other sufficient reason for it, there is a very practical consideration which cannot be ignored. I have almost exhausted the supply of paper that I had managed to secure after considerable difficulty and it is not easy to get more of it.

The discovery of India—what have I discovered? It was presumptuous of me to imagine that I could unveil her and find out what she is to-day and what she was in the long past. To-day she is four hundred million separate individual men and women, each differing from the other, each living in a private universe of thought and feeling. If this is so in the present, how much more difficult is it to grasp that multitudinous past of innumerable successions of human beings. Yet something has bound them together and binds them still. India is a geographical and economic entity, a cultural unity amidst diversity, a bundle of contradictions held together by strong but invisible threads. Overwhelmed again and again, her spirit was never conquered, and to-day when she appears to be the plaything of a proud conqueror, she remains unsubdued and unconquered. About her there is the elusive quality of a legend of long ago; some enchantment seems to have held her mind. She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present and pervasive. There are terrifying glimpses of dark corridors which seem to lead back to primeval night, but also there is the fullness and warmth of the day about her. Shameful and repellent she is occasionally, perverse and obstinate, sometimes even a little hysteric,

this lady with a past. But she is very lovable, and none of her children can forget her wherever they go or whatever strange fate befalls them. For she is part of them in her greatness as well as her failings, and they are mirrored in those deep eyes of hers that have seen so much of life's passion and joy and folly, and looked down into wisdom's well. Each one of them is drawn to her, though perhaps each has a different reason for that attraction or can point to no reason at all, and each sees some different aspect of her many-sided personality. From age to age she has produced great men and women, carrying on the old tradition and yet ever adapting it to changing times. Rabindranath Tagore, in line with that great succession, was full of the temper and urges of the modern age and yet was rooted in India's past, and in his own self built up a synthesis of the old and the new. 'I love India', he said, 'not because I cultivate the idolatry of geography, not because I have had the chance to be born in her soil but because she has saved through tumultuous ages the living words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of her great ones.' So many will say, while others will explain their love for her in some different way.

The old enchantment seems to be breaking to-day and she is looking around and waking up to the present. But however she changes, as change she must, that old witchery will continue and hold the hearts of her people. Though her attire may change, she will continue as of old, and her store of wisdom will help her to hold on to what is true and beautiful and good in this harsh, vindictive, and grasping world.

The world of to-day has achieved much, but for all its declared love for humanity, it has based itself far

more on hatred and violence than on the virtues that make man human. War is the negation of truth and humanity. War may be unavoidable sometimes, but its progeny are terrible to contemplate. Not mere killing, for man must die, but the deliberate and persistent propagation of hatred and falsehood, which gradually become the normal habits of the people. It is dangerous and harmful to be guided in our life's course by hatreds and aversions, for they are wasteful of energy and limit and twist the mind and prevent it from perceiving the truth. Unhappily there is hatred to-day in India and strong aversions, for the past pursues us and the present does not differ from it. It is not easy to forget repeated affronts to the dignity of a proud race. Yet, fortunately, Indians do not nourish hatred for long; they recover easily a more benevolent mood.

India will find herself again when freedom opens out new horizons, and the future will then fascinate her far more than the immediate past of frustration and humiliation. She will go forward with confidence, rooted in herself and yet eager to learn from others and co-operate with them. To-day she swings between a blind adherence to her old customs and a slavish imitation of foreign ways. In neither of these can she find relief or life or growth. It is obvious that she has to come out of her shell and take full part in the life and activities of the modern age. It should be equally obvious that there can be no real cultural or spiritual growth based on imitation. Such imitation can only be confined to a small number which cuts itself off from the masses and the springs of national life. True culture derives its inspiration from every corner of the world but it is

home-grown and has to be based on the wide mass of the people. Art and literature remain lifeless if they are continually thinking of foreign models. The day of a narrow culture confined to a small fastidious group is past. We have to think in terms of the people generally, and their culture must be a continuation and development of past trends, and must also represent their new urges and creative tendencies.

Emerson, over 100 years ago, warned his countrymen in America not to imitate or depend too much culturally on Europe. A new people as they were, he wanted them not to look back on their European past but to draw inspiration from the abounding life of their new country. 'Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves ... there are creative manners, there are creative actions and creative words ... that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.' And again in his essay on self-reliance: 'It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign fields, he is at home still, and shall

make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet.'

'I have no churlish objection,' continues Emerson, 'to the circum-navigation of the globe, for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that man is first domesticated, or does not go aboard with the hope of finding something greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

'But the rage for travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action .... We imitate .... Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean on and follow the past and the distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed .... Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half possession.'

We in India do not have to go abroad in search of the past and the distant. We have them here in abundance. If we go to foreign countries it is in search of the present. That search is necessary, for isolation from it means

backwardness and decay. The world of Emerson's time has changed and old barriers are breaking down; life becomes more international. We have to play our part in this coming internationalism and, for this purpose, to travel, meet others, learn from them and understand them. But a real internationalism is not something in the air without roots or anchorage. It has to grow out of national cultures and can only flourish to-day on a basis of freedom and equality and true internationalism. Nevertheless Emerson's warning holds to-day as it did in the past, and our search can only be fruitful in the conditions mentioned by him. Not to go anywhere as interlopers, but only if we are welcomed as equals and as comrades in a common quest. There are countries, notably in the British dominions, which try to humiliate our countrymen. They are not for us. We may, for the present, have to suffer the enforced subjection to an alien yoke and to carry the grievous burdens that this involves, but the day of our liberation cannot be distant. We are citizens of no mean country and we are proud of the land of our birth, or our people, our culture and traditions. That pride should not be for a romanticised past to which we want to cling; nor should it encourage exclusiveness or a want of appreciation of other ways than ours. It must never allow us to forget our many weaknesses and failings or blunt our longing to be rid of them. We have a long way to go and much leeway to make up before we can take our proper station with others in the van of human civilization and progress. And we have to hurry, for the time at our disposal is limited and the pace of the world grows ever swifter. It was India's way in the past to welcome and absorb other

cultures. That is much more necessary to-day, for we march to the one world of tomorrow where national cultures will be intermingled with the international culture of the human race. We shall therefore seek wisdom and knowledge and friendship and comradeship wherever we can find them, and co-operate with others in common tasks, but we are no suppliants for others' favours and patronage. Thus we shall remain true Indians and Asiatics, and become at the same time good internationalists and world citizens.

My generation has been a troubled one in India and the world. We may carry on for a little while longer, but our day will be over and we shall give place to others, and they will live their lives and carry their burdens to the next stage of the journey. How have we played our part in this brief interlude that draws to a close? I do not know. Others of a later age will judge. By what standards do we measure success or failure? That too I do not know. We can make no complaint that life has treated us harshly, for ours has been a willing choice, and perhaps life has not been so bad to us after all. For only they can sense life who stand often on the verge of it, only they whose lives are not governed by the fear of death. In spite of all the mistakes that we may have made, we have saved ourselves from triviality and an inner shame and cowardice. That, for our individual selves, has been some achievement. 'Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past, so live as not to be tortured for years without purpose, so live that dying he can say:

"All my life and my strength were given to the first cause of the world—the liberation of mankind."'*

EXERCISES

1. What does the author think binds India together, despite her varied history and her multitude of differences?
2. According to the author, India 'swings between a blind adherence to her old customs and a slavish imitation of foreign ways.' Why was neither of these conducive to growth?
3. According to Tagore, whom Nehru quotes to echo his own profession of love for India, what makes India lovable?
4. What should a true national culture be based on?
5. In this section, the author quotes Emerson extensively. In what way does he feel that Emerson's remarks are applicable to India? In what way are they not?
6. Why does Emerson consider travelling a superstition and a symptom of unsoundness?
7. What, according to the author, prevents the life of an individual from degenerating into triviality?

* *Nicoli Ostrovsky.*

In writing the *Discovery of India*, it was Nehru's endeavour to acquaint himself and his readers with India's continuing cultural traditions. Yet it was not merely an academic study of India's cultural history that he was aiming at. He saw that India's past was alive in its present, and that a close examination of this would encourage the people of the country to meet the challenges and problems of their day.

This abridged edition contains excerpts from his book, carefully selected. Each of the excerpts is preceeded by a brief introductory note and followed by extensive comprehension exercises to enable the student to interpret and analyze the text.

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